Saturday, March 28, 2026 No 86 ₹8

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Vast tracts of forest destroyed in wildfire

P4

DH on Saturday

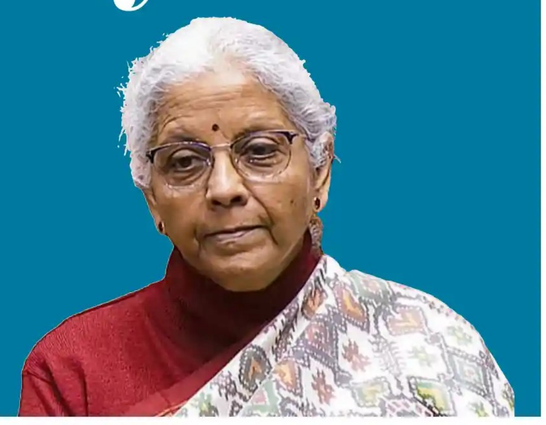
DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

No proposal of imposing lockdown: FM

Asks politicians to refrain from rumour-mongering

P9



KHEL BINDAAS

28 MAR - 31 MAY

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TATA IPL 2026

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There is no deal. What has happened here is decades of misgovernance, injustice and negligence by the CPM and Congress
Political Theatre
The BJP forced people to stand for hours in queues before LPG agencies, banks during demonetisation and in SIR camps

DECCAN HERALD
Saturday
March 28, 2026

Poll vault

CM conundrum

It is a problem of plenty for the Congress when it comes to chief ministerial aspirants in Kerala. KC Venugopal, Ramesh Chennithala and VD Satheesan are already in the race, though none is willing to speak publicly about their ambitions during this election season. However, the pitch has been queered by senior leaders K Sudhakaran and PJ Kurien, who have openly backed Chennithala, much to the dismay of the other two. Both appear to have an axe to grind, particularly against Leader of the Opposition Satheesan, who was instrumental in sidelining them.

Missing women

With the Congress-led UDF and the CPM-led LDF fielding fewer women candidates in Kerala, an organisation advocating equal political rights for women, 'Thulya Prathinidhya Prasthanam', has urged voters to back women candidates in their constituencies and opt for NOTA where none are in the fray. Of the 457 candidates, only 54 are women. Across the 140 seats, the LDF has fielded 18 women, while the UDF has named 12. The outgoing Assembly has just 12 women MLAs, up from eight in the previous term.

SHEMIN JOY, NEW DELHI

Meet the leader

G Sudhakaran
Independent backed by UDF
Ambalappuzha

Ambalappuzha in Alappuzha is often associated with the famous 'palpayasam' prasada of the Ambalapuzha Sri Krishna temple. But in this Kerala election, what is brewing in Ambalapuzha is the fight mounted by dissident veteran CPM leader G Sudhakaran against the party's official candidate, sitting MLA H Salam.

A two-time minister, 79-year-old Sudhakaran has a clean track record. A hardcore Communist, he proved his popularity by consistently increasing his victory margins. The Congress-led United Democratic Front is backing him in this election.

Sudhakaran entered politics as a student and went on to hold various positions in the party. He was first elected to the Kerala Assembly in 1996 from Kayamkulam in Alappuzha. He later won from Ambalapuzha in 2006, 2011 and 2016, each time increasing his victory margin.

His successor Salam won in 2021 with a margin of 11,125 votes, underscoring Sudhakaran's enduring influence in the constituency.

While Sudhakaran cites insult and neglect by party leaders as reasons for quitting the party and contesting as a rebel, the CPM leadership has sought to portray him as someone driven by parliamentary ambitions. His remark that a section of swing voters who once supported the BJP might now back him has triggered allegations from CPM camps of a 'BJP deal.

A staunch loyalist of former CM VS Achuthanandan in the past, Sudhakaran's current moves have triggered whisper campaigns suggesting he may emerge as a corrective force in the party.

Trivia

CH Mohammed Koya remains the only Indian Union Muslim League leader to have become chief minister of Kerala, though his tenure lasted barely 50 days, from October to December 1979. He is also the only Muslim to have held the top post. A seven-time member of the legislative assembly, he handled several key portfolios over a political career spanning more than four decades. AK Antony and Oommen Chandy are the two Christian leaders to have occupied the office. Kerala has had 11 chief ministers in total.

Why are parties silent over identity narrative in Barak Valley?

Area is dominated by Bengali-speaking population

FROM THE GROUND

SUMIR KARMAKAR
SILCHAR, DHNS

Announcements at Silchar Railway Station happen in three languages: Hindi, English, and Bengali. Assamese is not used here as Bengalis are dominant in this South Assam town. "Bangla please," said the tea-stall owner as he stared blankly at a question asked in Assamese.

A brownish memorial stands a few metres outside, and there, too, Assamese is missing in the plaque below. It names 11 "bhasha swahids", language martyrs, who died in firing by security forces on May 19, 1961, in this railway station during the Bhasha Andolan — the movement against the "imposition" of Assamese as the official language in the valley.

Bengali was later recognised as the official language in the Bengali-dominated Barak Valley. Silchar Station has been named as Bhasha Swahid Station, but is awaiting the Assam government's approval.

The narrative around identity that dominates campaigns for the April 9 Assembly elections in the rest of Assam is different here in the Barak Valley.

While the narrative in Guwahati and Upper Assam revolves around the promises of protection of the Assamese and other indigenous communities' identity and culture, the focus here is on the Bengalis and their identity.

"We are not against any other language, culture, or community. But the political parties here are not talking about the protection of our identity as strongly as they are talking for the Assamese and others in the rest of Assam," Silchar-based bookstall-owner Mainak Dasgupta said.

ASSAM
Assembly Poll

The valley continues to struggle for its own identity and development. Comprising the Cachar, Shri Bhumi (earlier Karimganj), and Hailakandi districts, it has a population of about 45 lakh, nearly 90% of whom speak Bengali. Nearly 65% are Bengali Hindus, while the rest are Muslim, Manipuri, and others.

There are very few poll-related hoardings or banners in and around Silchar, even as just a few days are left for the elections.

The BJP hoardings in the town highlight development works, but don't talk strongly about the question of identity. DH PHOTO

The BJP hoardings that dot the town highlight development works, but don't talk strongly about the question of identity. The ruling BJP's narrative, targeting Bengali-speaking Muslims, according to many here, has disturbed the communal camaraderie that prevails in the Barak Valley.

The Himanta Biswa Sarma government recently changed the name of Karimganj, which has a sizeable Muslim population, to Shri Bhumi.

"Identity crisis is still critical: Bengalis are tagged Bangladeshis just because of the language. The Citizenship Amendment Act was brought in 2020 with a promise to solve the citizenship crisis. But only five-six people have got citizenship so far. Bengali students are now being asked to submit documents of three generations in India for government jobs without any written notification," said Sanjib Deb Laskar, president of the Barak Valley Banga Sahitya Sanskriti Sammelan, a cultural and literary body.

The BJP has been dominant in the valley, winning six out of 15 Assembly seats in the 2021 polls. BJP candidates (Rajdip Roy and later Parimal Suklabaidya) have been elected from the Silchar Lok Sabha seat since 2019.

The 2023 delimitation, however, reduced the Assembly constituencies in the valley to 13 from the earlier 15. "This is part of a ploy to politically weaken the Bengalis," Jyotirindra Dey, a Congress leader in Silchar, told *DH*. He criticised the Congress regime as well. "Whichever party came to power, all tried to dominate and sideline the issues plaguing Bengalis and Barak Valley."

Will break backbone of Miyas: Himanta

DHAKUAKHANA (ASSAM), PTI: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said his government will "break the backbone" of Bangladeshi Miyas in the state if the BJP-led coalition returns to power in next month's election.

He asserted that the government will work to build a "strong Assamese society" and the illegal migrants will no longer be able to dare the indigenous community.

Addressing an election campaign meeting in Lakhimpur district, Sarma said, "We have worked very hard for the indigenous people of the state, and those who came from Bangladesh and encroached on Assam's land and homes, we broke their hands and legs, politically."

"This time, we will break the very backbone of the Bangladeshi Miyas, so that they cannot dare Assamese people," he added.

TMC candidates face SIR hurdle

Sahina Mumtaz Begum, Golam Rabbani, Fayezul Haque still 'under adjudication'

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
KOLKATA, DHNS

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) has fielded sitting MLA Sahina Mumtaz Begum from her home constituency of Naoda in Murshidabad.

However, even as the ruling party's "Numero Due", Abhishek Banerjee, is likely to hold a rally in her support soon, she remains worried, not over her prospects but because four-time MLA Nasiruddin Shah's daughter-in-law is still not sure whether she will be able to contest the polls.

The list the Election Commission (EC) published on February 28 after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of West Bengal's electoral rolls had her as a voter, but with an "under adjudication" tag, which meant that judicial officers would assess her right to vote. It was unchanged even in the first supplementary list, published on March 23.

Similar uncertainties loom over the candidature of Golam Rabbani and Fayezul Haque, the TMC's bets in Goalpokhar and Hansan, respectively.

WEST BENGAL
Assembly Poll

If uncertainties over their voting rights continue beyond April 6, the last day of filing nominations for the first phase of polling on April 23, Sahina, Rabbani, and Haque will not be able to contest.

Kalita Maji's name was also "under adjudication" in the roll published on February 28. She had been summoned to the hearing during the revision as she had seven siblings, a "logical discrepancy" according to the EC's parameters. The BJP, however, declared her the party's candidate from Aushgram in Purba Bardhaman. The March 23 list restored her voter status.

Clashes in Murshidabad

A heated exchange between two groups over Ram Navami celebrations escalated into violence in Murshidabad, even as Muslims offered water and fruits to Hindus participating in a procession led by BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari at Nandigram on Friday. Police and central paramilitary forces were deployed in Jangipur and Raghunathganj.

Police blocking my campaign in Chennai: Vijay

CHENNAI, PTI: TVK chief Vijay claimed on Friday that the state administration and the police are blocking his party's election campaign in Chennai, a move he described as a "fascist attack on democracy".

The TVK was denied permission to hold a campaign at Mullai Nagar Junction in the Perambur assembly constituency, which was scheduled for March 26.

In a post on X, Vijay alleged that despite seeking permission two days in advance, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) suddenly dug pits and placed iron barricades at the site just 24 hours before the event.

"Where did these sudden pits and barriers come from," Vijay questioned, adding that the police subsequently rejected the application by citing that the location could not accommodate a gathering of 3,000 people.

Vijay stated, "This ban is proof of how much the DMK fears TVK. Every time I attempt to campaign, the DMK government continues to delay or deny permission citing various reasons." He alleged that certain officials were acting as "servants of the ruling party" to suppress the democratic rights of a new political movement.

Meanwhile, Chennai District Election Officer and GCC Commissioner J Kumaragurubaran said that all campaign permissions are through the 'Suvidha' online portal and must follow established protocols.

BJP bagged Rs 6,074 crore in donations in 2024-25

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The BJP received nearly ten times the donations of all other national parties combined in 2024-25, according to a report released by electoral watchdog Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR). The party received over Rs 6,074 crore from 5,522 contributions, far exceeding the Rs 517.3 crore received by the Indian National Congress from 2,501 donations.

Overall, donations to national parties rose by 161% compared to the previous financial cycle. In 2023-24, parties had received Rs 4,104.28 crore. The ADR report considered only contributions above Rs 20,000 and called for stricter norms, including mandatory disclosure of the contributor's PAN for such donations.

In all, Rs 6,648.56 crore donations were made to national parties from 11,343 donations. Of these, 3,244 were made by corporate or business sectors, amounting to Rs 6128.78 cr (which amounted to 92.18% of total donations), while 7,900 individual donors donated Rs 505.66 cr (7.61%) to parties during the period.

There are six political parties recognised as national parties by the Election Commission of India — the Aam Aadmi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), and the Conrad Sangma-led National Peoples Party, besides the Congress and BJP.

The BSP declared that the party did not receive any donations above Rs 20,000 during 2024-25, and has been declaring the same during the past 19 years. The AAP said that it received Rs 38.1 cr from 2,554 donations. The CPM declared Rs 16.95-cr donations from 741 donors, while the NPP declared Rs 2 cr from 25 donors.

Donations to the BJP increased from Rs 2,243.95 cr in 2023-24 to Rs 6,074.02 cr in 2024-25, marking a 171% increase, while donations to the Congress rose from Rs 281.48 cr in 2023-24 to Rs 517.4 cr in 2024-25 (84% increase).

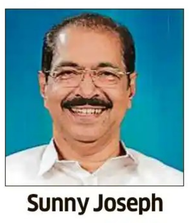
VOTER AWARENESS

A voter reads the description on a banner during the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) Tram Car Joy Ride as part of the voter awareness initiative ahead of the West Bengal Assembly elections, in Kolkata, on Friday. PTI

Shailaja vs Joseph: Peravoor braces for showdown

KORAH ABRAHAM
PERAVOOR (KANNUR), DHNS

KK Shailaja



Sunny Joseph

The Peravoor Assembly constituency in Kerala's Kannur district has emerged as one of the most closely watched contests in the state, with the Left Democratic Front (LDF) fielding former health minister KK Shailaja against state Congress president and sitting MLA Sunny Joseph of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Shailaja, who gained national and international recognition for her handling of the Covid-19 pandemic as Kerala's health minister, has been moved by the CPM from her previous constituency of Mattannur and has been tasked with the challenge to wrest the Peravoor seat from the Congress. This was seen by many as a way to 'politically sideline' the leader within the party, especially after she won from Mattannur with a record-breaking margin of 60,963 votes.

Located in the plantation belt of Kannur district, Peravoor is a mix of semi-urban centres, agrarian settlements and forest-fringe villages. The local economy is largely driven by rubber cultivation, plantation labour and small-scale agriculture.

Issues such as fluctuating rubber prices, human-wildlife conflict and infrastructure gaps in hilly regions have long shaped the political discourse here.

Farmers in several panchayats have repeatedly raised concerns over crop damage caused by elephants and wild boar, making it a recurring electoral issue.

Joseph has represented the constituency since 2011 and is seeking a fourth consecutive term. In the 2011 polls, he defeated Shailaja herself by a narrow margin of 3,440 votes. He consolidated his position in 2016 with a more comfortable victory, defeating CPM's Binoy Kurian by nearly 8,000 votes. The contest tightened again in 2021, when Joseph retained the seat by around 3,000 votes against CPM candidate KV Sakkeer Hussain.

The CPM has won the constituency only once, in 2006, incidentally when Shailaja herself represented the seat, underlining Peravoor's broader UDF tilt despite periodic close contests.

This election has added a new dimension to the contest with the CPM fielding Shailaja in Peravoor after she represented the neighbouring Mattannur constituency in the previous Assembly. The move is seen as part of the party's broader strategy of rotating candidates after multiple terms in a stronghold seat.

Addressing speculation about the shift, Shailaja has maintained that the decision was taken by the party and not by individual leaders. She has also emphasised her personal connection to the constituency, describing Peravoor as her "home turf" and noting that she spent her early years in the region before her marriage.

While Congress continues to rely on its organisational strength and Joseph's long-standing local presence, the CPM is banking on Shailaja's profile and popularity to mount a strong challenge.

CAMPAIGN SHIFT

Sabarimala row out, development in

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
PATHANAMTHITTA, DHNS

Even as the Sabarimala women's entry and gold heist issues persist, unlike in earlier elections, political parties — especially the BJP and the Congress — are not playing them up, even in Hindu pockets of the district such as the Aranmula constituency that includes Pathanamthitta town.

Neither BJP candidate Kummanam Rajasekharan nor Congress candidate Abin Varkey has been heard highlighting the Sabarimala shrine issue during their campaign. Instead, the focus has shifted to development.

KERALA
Assembly Poll

While CPM candidate, sitting MLA and Health Minister Veena George, seeks to showcase her development initiatives, an under-construction flyover in the heart of Pathanamthitta and a bridge that had to be closed soon after its inauguration, just ahead of the election declaration, pose hurdles in her bid for a hat-trick victory.

Resentment within the party against her — visible even earlier — as well as criticism of the state's health sector, make Veena's path difficult.

The BJP's setback in the recent local body polls in adjacent Pandalam, believed to be the place where Lord Ayyappa spent his childhood, could explain why both the BJP and the Congress are avoiding the Sabarimala issue.

"You should be campaigning that it is Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is contesting here, as my mission is to implement Modi's development visions," Kummanam told party workers during the campaign.

BJP's coalition partner Twenty20's Thomas K Samuel, contesting from Ranni where the temple is located, initially maintained that the Sabarimala issue may not be a major factor and that development would be the priority. He later had to retract his remarks for obvious political reasons.

"People are more concerned about issues directly affecting their lives. Moreover, Sabarimala is no longer a fresh issue. Hence, deriving political mileage from it seems unlikely, unless some major development occurs just ahead of the polls," said Vinod Kumar, a resident of Kumbazha near Pathanamthitta.

Challenge for BJP

Some BJP local leaders in Hindu pockets admit that winning in the Christian-dominated regions of Pathanamthitta remains a major challenge for the party. "A large chunk of voters here are abroad for study or work," a leader pointed out.

While Veena's earlier victories in the constituency were often credited to the Christian vote banks, young Congress leader Abin Varkey could now cut into that base. Having been at the forefront of protests against the government, Varkey may also benefit from the anti-incumbency sentiment against the Left Front government.

DH on Saturday

DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

WHACKY VERSE
OK. Sound Horn
Just listening to Donald Trump
People are rushing to the pump.
Out there on WhatsApp
We are definitely on top—
But will India cross every hump?

'Balen' sworn in as Nepal's 47th PM

Rapper-turned-politician country's youngest democratically elected PM

P11

A war reporter's diary

A journalist who covered the Afghanistan conflict shares an account of her time in the troubled country

War correspondents put their lives at risk every day. They are forced to think on their feet for their safety. Negotiating with the authorities for access, while delivering unbiased reports, is among the other major challenges they face.

In this week's Saturday Story, a freelance journalist who covered the conflict in Afghanistan in 2021 writes about her experience in the war-torn country.

The SATURDAY STORY

She was interviewing a women's organisation when they received news that the Taliban had advanced into Kabul, and taken control of the entire country. Two days after the takeover she returned to India on a military aircraft. She went back to Afghanistan a few months later. This time, she reported on the erosion of women's rights. She was blacklisted and has not been able to visit the country since.

Full story, Page 15

■ Constant communication, coordination between Centre, states | ■ Need for advance planning in agriculture sector | ■ States to activate control rooms at state and district levels | ■ Cautions against spread of misinformation and rumours | ■ CMs to be vigilant against online frauds and fake agents | ■ Accelerate efforts in promoting alternative energy sources

Act against hoarding, PM tells CMs amid fuel crunch

'WAR' FOOTING: In first such meet, Modi seeks supply chain boost

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged chief ministers to ensure smooth functioning of supply chains and take strict measures against hoarding and profiteering.

The prime minister held a virtual meeting with chief ministers to review the preparedness and contingency plans of states in view of the ongoing West Asia conflict.

In the meeting, Modi emphasised the government's priorities — maintaining economic and trade stability, ensuring energy security, safeguarding citizens' interests and strengthening industry and supply chains.

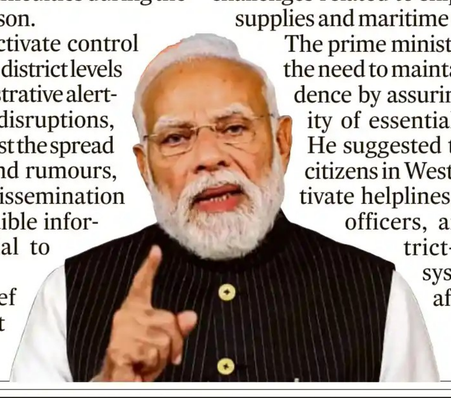
He called for constant communication and coordination between the Centre and the states, along with timely sharing of information and joint decision-making, to enable swift and well-coordinated responses.

Amid growing concerns over possible energy supply shortages, this was the first such meeting convened by the prime minister with chief ministers since the West Asia conflict began on February 28.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah were also present during the meeting.

The prime minister stressed the need for advance planning in the agriculture sector, particularly in monitoring fertiliser storage and distribution, to ensure farmers do not face difficulties during the upcoming Kharif season.

Asking states to activate control rooms at the state and district levels and maintain administrative alertness to prevent any disruptions, Modi cautioned against the spread of misinformation and rumours, stating that timely dissemination of accurate and credible information was essential to prevent panic.



Advising the chief ministers to be vigilant against online frauds and fake agents, the prime minister asked border and coastal states to pay special attention to emerging challenges related to shipping, essential supplies and maritime operations.

The prime minister underscored the need to maintain public confidence by assuring the availability of essential commodities. He suggested that states with citizens in West Asia should activate helplines, appoint nodal officers, and set up district-level support systems to assist affected families.

Modi urged states to accelerate efforts in promoting alternative energy sources such as biofuels, solar energy, the GOBARdhan initiative, electric mobility and expanding piped natural gas connections. Reiterating that addressing the challenge is a shared responsibility, the prime minister expressed confidence that the nation would successfully overcome the situation by working together as "Team India".

The CMs expressed confidence that the situation remains stable, with availability of petrol, diesel and LPG, and assured that continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential commodities.

Windfall tax on fuel exports, Page 9

First aid responders inspect the site of an Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon. AFP

Latest from West Asia

US-Israeli airstrikes damage two major steel plants in Iran

- Iran warns civilians across West Asia to urgently leave areas near US forces
- Iran's Revolutionary Guards warn that hotels housing US soldiers across West Asia will be targets
- Kuwait's main commercial port damaged in a drone attack at dawn
- Iran turns back three ships trying to transit Strait of Hormuz
- G7 allies pressing US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for clarity on war

Iran says its nuclear facilities were attacked, hours after Israel threatened to "escalate and expand" the war. Iran's FM says Tehran would exact a "HEAVY price for Israeli crimes"

Muniyappa represents CM

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah skipped the meeting, with Food and Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa attending it on his behalf. Criticising the chief minister, BJP Karnataka unit president B Y Vijayendra said Siddaramaiah had betrayed the state by skipping the important meeting that discussed steps to be taken during the crisis.

Rs 10 cut in petrol, diesel excise duty

The Union government has slashed special excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre, in order to shield the consumers from price hike as spike in crude oil price amid the ongoing West Asia conflict widens losses of the oil marketing companies. **Details on Page 9**

State introduces grading for third language in SSLC

Third language score will not be included in final marks

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government on Friday announced that from the current academic year, SSLC students will not be awarded marks for the third language subjects like Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and others. Instead, they will receive grades such as A, B, C, and D for these languages.

Announcing the decision, School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa said, "Exam will be conducted for the third language, but marks won't be awarded, adding marks secured in third languages will not be considered while calculating the overall percentage. The percentage will be calculated for 525 instead of the existing 625."

The decision will be applicable to the students who are appearing for the SSLC exams. The third language exam will be held on March 31.

The decision was taken based on demands by pro-Kannada organisations that urged the government to ensure that Hindi is not "imposed" on students, considering the number of students failing in SSLC exams because of Hindi, added the minister.

According to the education department, though there are other subjects like Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and Arabic, a majority of students opt for Hindi as the third language.

The education minister further said that there will be no changes in the teaching methodology. "The third language will not ignored. The decision, however, will reduce exam stress on students," he added.

An official order on shifting to the grading system of the third languages will be issued by March 31, the minister said.

Data from the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) reveals that in 2025, as many as 1.64 lakh students failed in the third language and out of that 1.48 lakh had opted for Hindi.

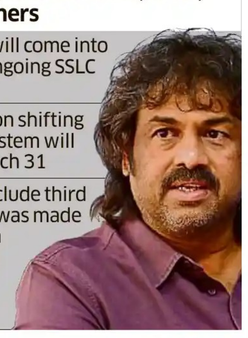
The minister stated that several states have already introduced a grading system and some have also shifted to a two-language policy. "I will not talk about the two-language policy here," he said.

Kannada Development Authority chairperson Purushottam Bilimale welcomed the move and said, "This decision will not just reduce the burden on students, but it will also promote the growth of Kannada."

New marking system

Students to get grades for third language subjects like Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and others

- The new rule will come into force from the ongoing SSLC exams
- Official order on shifting to the grading system will be issued by March 31
- Decision to exclude third language marks was made to reduce burden on students, said Minister Madhu Bangarappa



Wine merchants allege multi-crore excise scam

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Federation of Wine Merchants Association, Karnataka, has alleged a multi-crore scam in the excise department, citing irregularities in the allocation of liquor licences spanning nearly two decades.

The allegation pertains to transfer of 463 licences to the state-run MSIL in 2008-09. The association claimed while these were classified as defunct or non-renewed for the MSIL's use, many were subsequently restored for private players.

Details on Page 3A

BIG-TICKET CRICKET RETURNS TO CHINNASWAMY

RCB face SRH in season opener

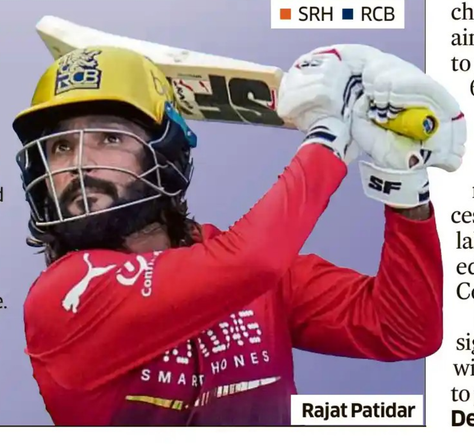
Nearly 10 months after their most memorable moment turned into a nightmare in less than 24 hours, following the death of 11 fans in a stampede during their maiden IPL victory celebrations on June 4, Royal Challengers Bengaluru return to their fortress M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday to kick off the 19th edition against Sunrisers Hyderabad in what promises to be a blockbuster derby.

Ishan Kishan

RCB vs SRH head to head

"Of course, we are the holders from last year, but this is a brand new year and we are all looking forward to this challenge."

Andy Flower
RCB Head Coach



Rajat Patidar

Rs 2.38L-cr defence purchases approved

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Defence Ministry on Friday approved purchasing of five additional S-400 air defence systems from Russia to protect more IAF bases and 60 medium transport aircraft to replace the ageing AN-32 fleet.

Both are among a large number of "Acceptance of Necessity" proposals worth Rs 2.38 lakh crore that were green-lighted by the Defence Acquisition Council.

Also, the Defence Ministry signed two separate agreements with US and Russian companies to purchase critical hardware.

Details on Page 9

Stock market dives amid war uncertainty

Equity investors faced an erosion of Rs 8.86 lakh crore from their wealth on Friday as markets went into a tailspin as the West Asia war showed no signs of easing. The BSE Sensex tanked 1,690.23 points to settle at 73,583.22. The NSE Nifty dropped 486.85 points to end at 22,819.60.

P 12

Rupee tanks to fresh all-time low of 94.85

The rupee slumped by a massive 89 paise to close at a historic low of 94.85 against the US dollar on Friday, as concerns of higher crude oil prices weighed heavily on the currency. The rupee had slumped 20 paise to close at a record low of 93.96 against the dollar on Wednesday.

P 12

7 killed in Kashmir avalanches

Seven people were killed and five others injured after multiple avalanches hit the Srinagar-Leh national highway on Friday, officials said. The avalanches hit the stretch between Zero Point and Minimarg in the afternoon, leaving several vehicles trapped under the debris, they said.

P 10

MAIDEN BUDGET

East corporation focuses on infra, Central sticks to basics

NAVEEN MENEZES & SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Two of Bengaluru's five municipal corporations presented their maiden budget for 2026-27 on Friday. While the Bengaluru East City Corporation's budget prioritised new infrastructure projects based on local requirements, the Central corporation focused mostly on the redevelopment of existing projects.

This was also the sixth consecutive budget presented by senior IAS officers without an elected body. If the civic body elections are held by June this year, the elected councils are likely to present a supplementary budget.

As per the budget documents, the East corporation has projected a total outlay of Rs 3,890 crore while the Central corporation's total estimates come close to Rs 3,427 crore. Both corporations presented the budget with a nominal surplus.

The budget proposes redevelopment of Ulsoor Lake. DH FILE PHOTO

The projects proposed by the East corporation includes an elevated corridor between Varthur and Gunjur, which is going to be an extension of the flyover proposed by the Karnataka Road Development Corporation along the same stretch. A new flyover has been proposed across the outer ring road (ORR) near Alpine Eco road. A sum of Rs 25 crore has been set aside to widen the existing railway vent in Doddanakundi.

On the other hand, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation has proposed redevelopment of Ulsoor lake at an estimated cost of Rs 20 crore and Russell Market at an estimated cost of Rs 70 crore. Though the corporation has not announced big projects, it has earmarked grants for the construction of 10 community halls and a sum of Rs 2.25 crore per ward.

Notably, property tax contributes a significant revenue for both the corporations but the East corporation appears financially independent as it expects to earn about 29% of the total revenue from schemes such as premium floor area ratio (FAR) and advertisement policy. To match the revenue gap, the Central corporation has received Rs 650 crore from the state government. On the contrary, the East corporation is expected to get just Rs 348 crore.

On Saturday, three other corporations are set to present their budgets.

Related reports, Page 2

BUDGET PLANS

East corporation — ₹3,890 cr Outlay

Key proposals: Elevated corridor between Varthur and Gunjur, new flyover across ORR near Alpine Eco road, widening of existing railway vent in Doddanakundi

Central corporation — ₹3,427 cr Outlay

Key proposals: Redevelopment of Ulsoor Lake and Russell Market; grants for construction of 10 community halls, grant of Rs 2.25 crore per ward.

Each lawmaker to get two IPL tickets: DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS: Lawmakers will get two tickets each for the Indian Premier League (IPL) opener between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad on Saturday, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said.

Shivakumar said this after holding talks with Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) president Venkatesh Prasad, who also met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah separately on Friday. "For the first match, they (lawmakers) will get two tickets each. For the remaining matches, we will discuss later," Shivakumar said.

This came a day after Speaker U T Khader directed the government to ensure that lawmakers get four tickets to watch cricket matches at the Chinnaswamy Stadium after members across parties slammed the KSCA in the Assembly for 'disrespecting' elected representatives.

"The Speaker had sought four tickets.

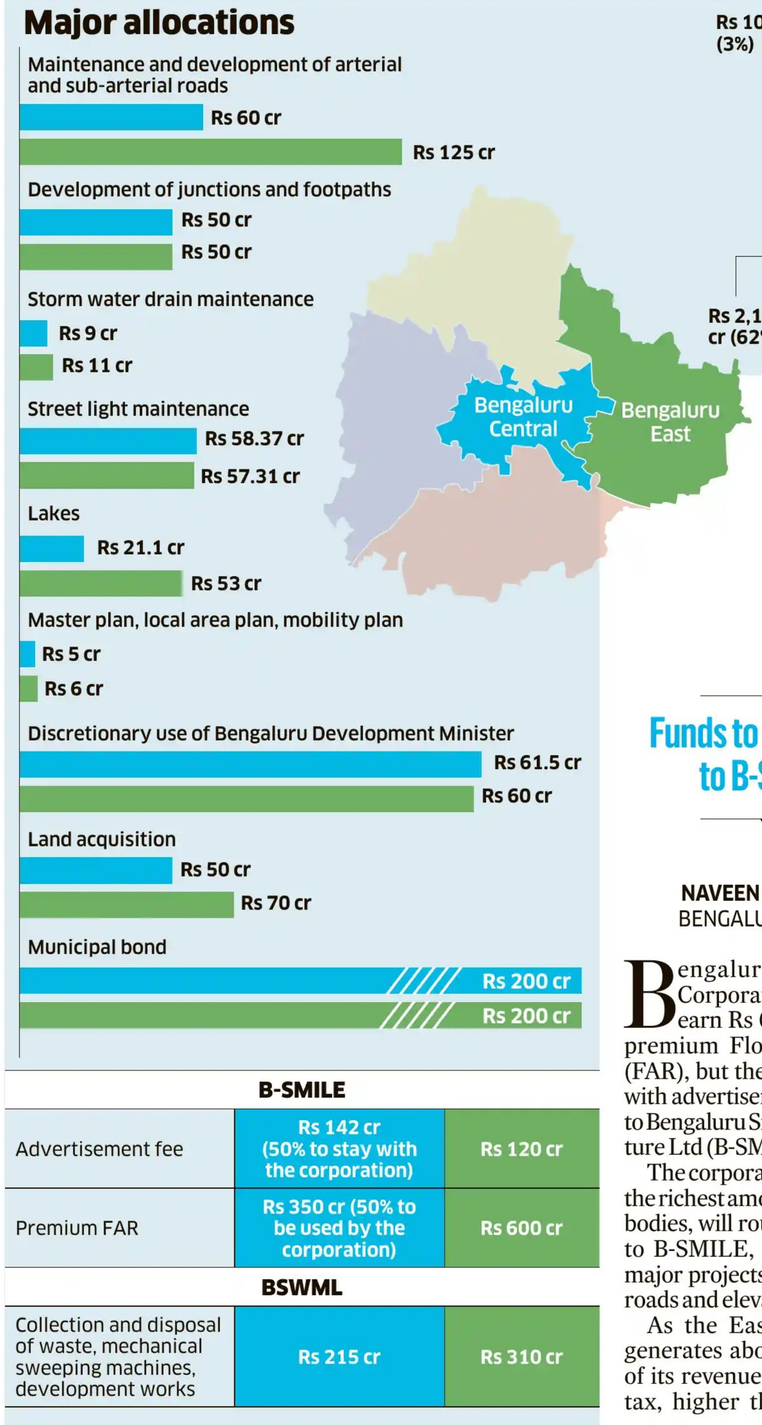
KSCA president Venkatesh Prasad meets CM Siddaramaiah on Friday.

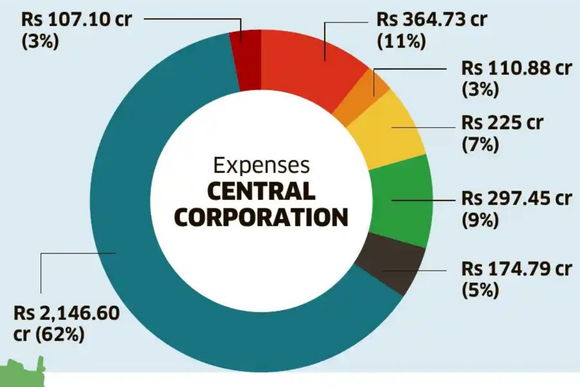
But all tickets have been sold. There is no place and there are so many members. Time is short. For now, I have asked them (KSCA) to give two tickets per lawmaker and they have agreed. I have spoken to RCB, too," Shivakumar said. "Four tickets can't be given. Every MLA, MP and minister used to get one ticket each. Now, they will get two tickets," he added.

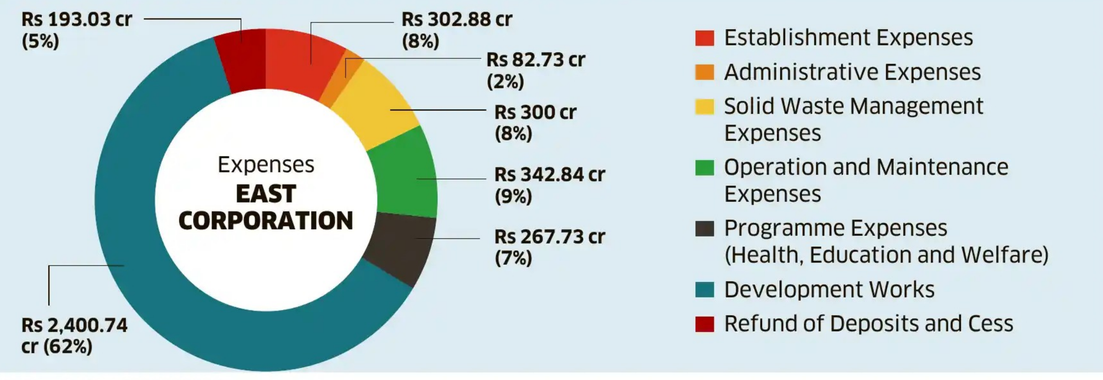
▸ IPL tickets, Page 5

BENGALURU BUDGET: Corporations prioritise growth & social welfare; North, South & West budgets today

Major allocations







B-SMILE		
Advertisement fee	Rs 142 cr (50% to stay with the corporation)	Rs 120 cr
Premium FAR	Rs 350 cr (50% to be used by the corporation)	Rs 600 cr
BSWML		
Collection and disposal of waste, mechanical sweeping machines, development works	Rs 215 cr	Rs 310 cr

Premium FAR, property tax lift East Corporation revenue

Funds to be routed to B-SMILE

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru East City Corporation expects to earn Rs 600 crore from premium Floor Area Ratio (FAR), but the revenue along with advertisement fee will go to Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd (B-SMILE).

The corporation, likely to be the richest among the five civic bodies, will route the revenue to B-SMILE, which handles major projects such as tunnel roads and elevated corridors.

As the East Corporation generates about 39 per cent of its revenue from property tax, higher than other corporations, the government has reduced its allocation to Rs 348 crore.

Presenting the budget on Friday, Commissioner DS Ramesh said allocations were made keeping in mind civic life, long-term gains and transparency. He announced reforms in the revenue department, including technology-based property tax collection and issuance of e-khata, and said Rs 70 crore has been set aside to acquire land for road and infrastructure projects.

A sum of Rs 2.25 crore has been allocated per ward, largely for desilting drains and repairing footpaths.

The budget earmarks Rs 50 crore for the development of the Outer Ring Road (ORR), estimated to cost Rs 450 crore and partly funded by the government. The corporation also plans to build a 9-km footpath along the Metro viaduct on the ORR with support from the Outer Ring Road Companies Association. Since East Corporation, especially the KR Puram Zone, has fewer parks than other areas, Rs 17.50 crore has been set aside for park development and Rs 10 crore for maintenance.

On the budget, Mahadevapura MLA Manjula Limbavali hoped the announcements would be implemented. "Flooding has been a concern, but the work at Bellandur and Varthur has been slow."

Bengaluru East City Corporation Commissioner DS Ramesh (second from left) with Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao and other civic officials before the presentation of the budget at Town Hall on Friday.

Major announcements

- **Rs 20 crore** for development of prominent places
- **Rs 40 crore** for road-widening projects: Bileshivalya Main Road, New ORR to Satya Sai Hospital metro station, Belathur Main Road, Nallurahalli Main Road, Whitefield Main Road
- **Rs 5 crore** to construct an electric crematorium
- **Rs 4 crore** for a state-of-the-art stray dog neutering surgery centre in Mahadevapura
- **Rs 12 crore** for dog shelters
- **Rs 5 crore** for Indira Canteens
- **Subsidy under Swalambi Sarathi Scheme:** Rs 1.5 lakh for car purchase and Rs 80,000 for autorickshaw purchase
- Total allocation of Rs 221 crore for welfare schemes

Redevelopment, social sector prioritised in Central Corporation budget

Plans to develop selected roads as business corridors with upgraded infra

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) prioritises redevelopment and social sectors in its first budget, with an outlay of nearly Rs 3,426.61 crore.

BCCC officials presented the corporation's first budget, covering some of the city's busiest areas, including the Central Business District (CBD).

The corporation plans to develop selected roads as business corridors, with upgraded infrastructure and higher premium fees to boost commercial activity.

"To elevate the commercial significance of the city to a global level, we will develop selected roads as business corridors. We will provide state-of-the-art infrastructure in these corridors and collect higher premium fees," the budget said.

BCCC Commissioner Rajendra Cholan said the corridors will follow models from other cities. "The business corridors will be developed similar to the corridors in Hyderabad and Mumbai. It will be similar to special economic corridors."

With core areas witnessing rapid growth over the years, the budget focuses on redevelopment and beautification of historic buildings, markets, lakes and landmarks.

The corporation has also proposed new initiatives in health, education and welfare sectors.

"Considering that many areas in the corporation limits are already developed, we have focused on providing better healthcare and education facilities for the residents," said GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao.

Deputy Commissioner (Finance) KT Vijayalakshmi, with GBA officials M Maheshwar Rao, Rajendra Cholan, and Daljit Kumar at the Central Corporation budget presentation.
DH PHOTOS/PRASHANTH HG

Property tax remains the corporation's main revenue source. It also plans to raise funds through municipal bonds, outdoor advertising, premium FAR, and other means. The corporation aims to generate Rs 58 crore through rental income from properties and Rs 25 crore from market rents by improving utilisation of its assets.

"We will mobilise financial resources through asset monetisation. We will lease vacant corporation buildings, shops, and offices to private institutions. Our goal is to generate stable income by converting unused corporation buildings into commercial shops or offices and leasing them out for long terms," the budget said.

The corporation will spend nearly Rs 217.50 crore on developing arterial and sub-arterial roads through a state government grant.

Major announcements

- New parking policy to boost **non-tax revenue**
- **Rs 70 crore** for redevelopment of Russell Market
- **Rs 20 crore** for development of Ulsoor Lake
- **Bike ambulance** to be launched on pilot basis
- **Rs 2.25 crore** for each ward
- **Rs 15 crore** for decorative electrification on major roads
- **'Hejje Hejjege Surakshe'** (Safety at Every Step): Rs 50 crore for 50-km footpath upgrade + 15-km new footpath
- **9 new skywalks** under PPP model
- **Rs 40 crore** to upgrade healthcare facilities
- **Rs 19 crore** for Arogya Mitra to set up Smart Virtual Clinics
- **'Hiriyara Vadi'** (Elders' Abode): Residential complexes for senior citizens (CSR-based)
- **'Vatsalya Mane':** Day-care center for specially abled children
- **AI training for students** in corporation-run institutions
- **'Cyber Kavacha'** awareness campaign against cybercrime
- **Rs 1 crore** for electric animal crematorium
- **Rs 35.7 crore** for 500 houses (weaker sections)
- **Rs 10 crore** for Blue-Green Corridors (bioswales & tree planting)
- **20 SHE toilets** + 60 new public toilets
- **EV charging** mandate policy for apartment complexes
- **Dedicated Urban Design** Cell for roads & public spaces
- **Rs 11.5 crore** for tree canopy development
- **50,000 roadside saplings** to be planted
- **Rs 6.85 crore** for public education

BNP slams budget without citizens' participation

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) described the city budget as a hollow exercise as it is being prepared without meaningful citizen participation.

"Any financial plan that fails to incorporate inputs from residents at the area sabha and ward levels fails to reflect the real needs and priorities of Bengaluru," said Srikanth Narasimhan, founder of BNP.

The current budget, the party said, has been designed by a small group of officials with little to no genuine consultation with the public.

While there have been claims of public consultations, these efforts have been largely perfunctory, it said.

Central Corpn takes possession of 33 properties over tax arrears

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) on Friday took possession of 33 properties with the highest tax arrears after no bidders came forward for auction.

The decision was taken days after the corporation issued a notification to auction the properties.

Officials said action was taken under relevant rules after nobody participated in the auction process. Further orders have been issued to register additional properties in the name of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation.

Rajendra Cholan, Commissioner of the Central City Corporation, urged property owners with pending dues to clear their tax immediately and avoid legal action.

Cantt-Baiyappanahalli quadrupling nearly ready, officials inspect OHE work

BENGALURU, DHNS

In a milestone for the Bengaluru Cantonment-Whitefield quadrupling project, the South Western Railway's Principal Chief Electrical Engineer GV Mallikarjuna Rao inspected overhead equipment electrification (OHE) works on the third and fourth lines between Bengaluru Cantonment and Baiyappanahalli West Cabin on Friday.

The Rs 492.8-crore Bengaluru Cantonment-Whitefield (19 km) quadrupling project has faced delays due to land acquisition. The SWR has missed its last deadline of completing the Cantonment-Baiyappanahalli section by December 2025. It may now open in the coming weeks.

The entire section is now expected to be ready by December 2026 or early 2027.

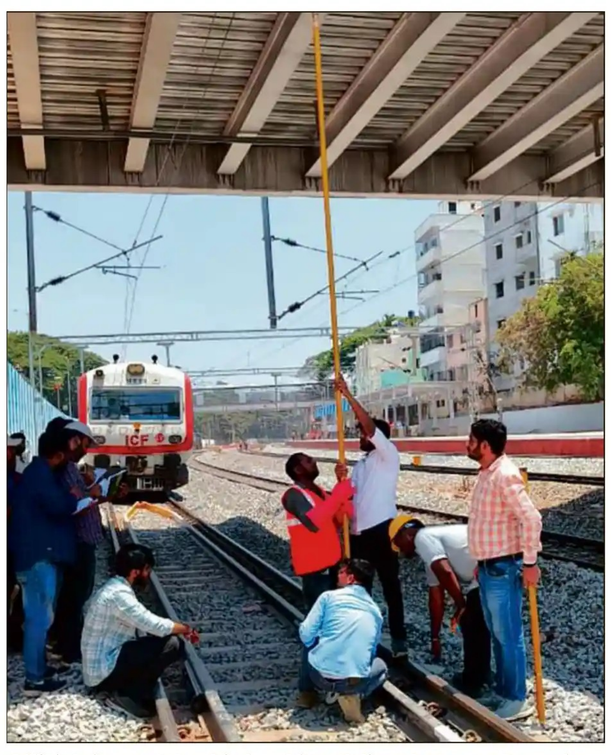
Meanwhile, Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety (CCRS) Janak Kumar Garg on Thursday conducted statutory inspection and speed trials on two newly laid railway lines in Tumakuru district.

The lines inspected include the 11-km stretch between Tumakuru and Urukere, which is part of the Tumakuru-Rayadurga new line, and the 13-km Urukere-Thimmarajanahalli stretch, which falls under the Tumakuru-Chitradurga-Davangere new line project.

The 11-km Tumakuru-Urukere section has 18 minor bridges, two major bridges, and 18 road underbridges. The Urukere station yard has four lines.

Out of the 207 km-long Tumakuru–Rayadurga line project, 83 km has been commissioned so far.

The 13-km Urukere–Thimmarajanahalli section has five major bridges, 17 minor bridges, four road overbridges, six road underbridges, and a passenger subway at Thimmarajanahalli. Thimmarajanahalli is a five-line station, the SWR said.


Officials inspect the third and fourth lines between Bengaluru Cantonment and Baiyappanahalli West Cabin on Friday. SWR

IN FINE PRINT

Corporation	Applications received	Applications processed	Revenue generated (In Rs lakh)
Central	31	0	0
East	1,511	178	66.7
West	1,813	147	25.65
North	2,351	208	50.86
South	1,479	167	117.66
Total	**7,185**	**700**	**260.87**

'B' to 'A' khata: 700 applications processed since November

BENGALURU, DHNS: Close to 700 properties have been converted from 'B' khata to 'A' khata since November 2025, according to data from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

These conversions have generated nearly Rs 2.6 crore in revenue for the city's five corporations.

However, the authority has received around 7,185 applications for khata conversion so far. Officials stated in a written response to the Legislative Assembly that the process is time-consuming, which has limited the number of applications processed.

According to the response, one of the key requirements for conversion is that the corresponding road must be declared a public road. This involves issuing a notification and keeping it open for public objections for at least 30 days, contributing to delays.

Additionally, a senior GBA official said that a spot inspection by revenue inspectors is mandatory for every application, further slowing the process.

While the GBA had estimated that nearly 7.5 lakh properties would be eligible for conversion, only about 7,000 applications have been submitted so far. Many citizens have complained that the conversion fee set by the corporations is too high. Others have raised concerns that the government has approved regularisation only of the plot, and not the buildings constructed on it.

Data shows that the Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) has received just 31 applications, while the other four corporations have received thousands. The Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC), with 2,351 applications, has recorded the highest number.

The government launched the 'B' to 'A' khata conversion scheme on November 1, 2025, with a 100-day window for citizens to apply.

Technical Advisory Committee formed to strengthen palliative care in Karnataka

BENGALURU, DHNS: The State Health Department has constituted a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to strengthen and expand palliative care services across Karnataka.

The initiative aligns with the National Programme for Palliative Care (NPPC) and seeks to enhance the availability, accessibility, and quality of palliative care services across the state.

As part of this effort, Karnataka plans to adopt successful models from other regions, particularly the Keralam model, which has demonstrated that a public health–based, community-supported system can effectively deliver palliative care to many patients.

The model provides care through a combination of home-based services, outpatient clinics, and inpatient facilities, supported by trained community volunteers and digital management systems.

The TAC will be chaired by Dr Raj Kumar Khatri, former Additional Chief Secretary, and include senior officials from Health and Family Welfare Services, along with leading palliative care experts: Dr Anuradha Ganigara (Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health), Dr Yadhuraj Gowda (Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology), Dr Rajani Surendra Bhat (Sparsh Hospitals), and Dr Nandini Vallath (St John's Medical College Hospital). One representative from a recognised non-governmental organisation in palliative care will also be included.

It will act as the primary technical advisory body for palliative care. Its responsibilities include guiding preparation, implementation, and periodic review of the State Palliative Care Policy, recommending treatment protocols, standards, and service delivery models across primary, secondary, and tertiary care levels, and advising on policy and inter-department coordination.

Rammed by overloaded truck, cabbie burnt alive inside vehicle

Lorry driver lost control on a steep slope, say cops

Fire and emergency personnel inspect the accident site in Kurubarahalli on Friday. DH PHOTO

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 23-year-old cab driver was burnt alive early Friday after an overloaded lorry lost control on a slope and rammed his parked car in Kurubarahalli.

The victim, Ambadas from Kalaburagi, was sleeping inside his Maruti Suzuki Ertiga while waiting for a passenger when the accident occurred around 1.15 am.

Rajajinagar Traffic Police said a 16-wheeler lorry carrying TMT steel rods was travelling from Andhra Pradesh towards Sunkadakatte.

The driver, Deepak Yadav, was following a route using Google Maps that led him down a narrow 20-foot-wide residential road with a steep incline.

As the lorry was overloaded, Yadav lost control on the slope and crashed into the parked cab, dragging it for nearly 100 feet before hitting a scrap godown.

The impact ignited the car's CNG kit, causing a massive fire.

The truck driver escaped with injuries, while Ambadas was trapped inside and charred to death.

Rajajinagar traffic police have registered a case of death by negligence against the lorry driver. Police said the steep, narrow road is difficult for heavy vehicles to navigate.

KSRTC bus catches fire near Lulu Mall, 21 passengers & crew unhurt

BENGALURU, DHNS: Panic gripped commuters on Thursday night after a KSRTC bus caught fire mid-journey near Lulu Mall at Rajajinagar.

All 21 passengers and crew members escaped before the vehicle was engulfed in flames.

The incident occurred around 10.30 pm, minutes after the bus had departed from the Kempegowda Bus Station at 10.15 pm. The bus, KA57F-1062, an Ashok Leyland model, was travelling from Bengaluru to Shivamogga.

A screen grab of the Shivamogga-bound KSRTC bus on fire near Lulu Mall, Rajajinagar on Thursday night.

Near Lulu Mall, a motorcyclist noticed fire from the lower portion of the engine and alerted the crew.

The driver pulled the vehicle to the side of the road. The crew used the on-board fire extinguisher and ensured passengers evacuated safely.

Fire and Emergency Services personnel from Rajajinagar reached the spot and extinguished the blaze.

"The bus had just started its journey. As soon as the smoke was spotted, the crew ensured everyone got off. Within minutes, the blaze spread across the body of the bus," said a senior officer from the Magadi Road police station.

Suspected diesel leak

Preliminary reports suggested a diesel leak may have triggered the fire, but police said initial findings point to a short circuit in the electrical wiring.

KSRTC officials said all passengers were shifted to alternate corporation buses to continue their journey to Shivamogga.

Man walks into police station with brother-in-law's body, confesses to murder over family dispute

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bannerghatta police were left in shock when a man entered the police station claiming to have killed his brother-in-law and brought the body with him.

The accused, Srinivas, runs a dog kennel and lives in Bhyrappanahalli.

Police said Srinivas had married the deceased Ranjith's sister. Ranjith (24) was in a relationship with Srinivas' younger married sister, which angered him.

On Thursday, Srinivas called Ranjith to Bilwaradahalli near Bannerghatta to discuss the issue, but hit him on the head with a metal rod. Ranjith died, police said.

Srinivas later went to the police station with Ranjith's body in his car and surrendered. He was arrested under BNS Section 103 (murder). The body has been sent for autopsy.

Investigations are underway.

Lamborghini with fake fancy number lands owner in police net again

Viral 'drift' video leads to probe; fraud charges invoked

BENGALURU, DHNS

Cubbon Park Traffic Police, who registered a suo motu FIR after a Lamborghini was seen performing dangerous drifting at Anil Kumble Circle, have found the owner was allegedly involved in fraud and deception.

Ricky Rai

Police identified the owner as Ricky Rai.

On March 21, around 2.40 am, the car was seen performing stunts at Anil Kumble Circle. Police also found CCTV footage of the same car performing similar drifting near M Chinnaswamy Stadium minutes later. The car now remains at the Cubbon Park Law and Order Police Station. DH FILE PHOTO

On March 21 around 2.40 am, the car was seen performing stunts and a citizen posted a video on X, tagging the Bengaluru City Police.

Police also found CCTV footage of the same car performing similar drifting near M Chinnaswamy Stadium minutes later.

Traffic police verified details and registered a case based on a complaint by constable Shanmukha.

The car was seized and a probe was launched under provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

During the investigation, enquiries with the Regional Transport Office (South) revealed no vehicle in Karnataka is registered under KA 05 NR 0009, which was displayed on the Lamborghini. Police found the vehicle's original registration was DL 1 CT 1515, belonging to Rabara Bhavanaben Vinodkumar.

Police said Rai had purchased the car, but did not transfer its registration to Karnataka. He allegedly used a fake fancy number plate to avoid penalties and detection.

Cubbon Park Law and Order police have booked Rai under BNS sections 318 (cheating), 340 (wrongful confinement), and 341 (wrongful restraint).

Further investigation is underway and the car remains at the traffic police station, an officer said.

Woman's morphed photos created with AI, uploaded on Insta

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 33-year-old woman from Hebbal has alleged that unidentified morphed her photographs using AI and uploaded them on fake Instagram handles.

She told police that on March 16, she found two fake Instagram handles created in her name carrying explicitly edited photographs of her.

The woman urged police to delete the handles and take legal action.

A case has been registered under Section 66(C) (identity theft) of the Information Technology Act.

Further probe is underway.

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Pregnant minor forced into marriage; police register case against 25-yr-old man, her parents

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kadugodi police have registered a case against a 25-year-old man, the parents of a minor girl, and a relative for conducting a child marriage.

A senior police officer said the case was registered on a complaint by the Legal and Probation Officer of the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU).

The complaint stated the girl, a victim in a Pocso case, was forced into an engagement with Nataraj, an employee of a broadband service provider, in May 2025. She was five months pregnant when the marriage was conducted in December 2025.

The incident came to light when the girl visited a private hospital for routine check-ups. Medical staff alerted the Child Helpline, following which the DCPU intervened.

Officials later visited the girl's school, verified her age and confirmed she is a minor. Photographs of the wedding showing family members were also collected.

During the investigation, police found the girl had been sexually abused in November 2021 by a man identified as Albert.

A second case was registered against him at the Kadugodi police station in June 2025 for allegedly stalking and physically assaulting her in front of her mother.

Based on the complaint, police have booked the accused under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act and the Pocso Act.

The main accused, Nataraj from Tamil Nadu, is absconding.

"The mother's involvement in the marriage is suspected at the preliminary stage. We are probing the case from all angles," the officer said.

SVN Memorial Music Fest returns with 7 concerts, celebrating classical music artistes

BENGALURU, DHNS: The 26th edition of the SVN Memorial Annual Music Festival and National Award Presentation Ceremony will be held from March 28 to April 18 at SVN Memorial Hall, Nettigere.

Celebrating Carnatic and Hindustani classical music, the annual festival this year will happen on four Saturdays, featuring performances by seven artistes.

Since its inception in 2001, the festival has hosted eminent musicians such as TV Gopalakrishnan, Bombay Jayashri, and the Mysore Brothers.

Over the years, legendary artistes, including MS Subbulakshmi, Pandit Jasraj, and the musical duo Bombay Sisters, have been honoured with the S V Narayanaswamy Rao Memorial National Award.

This year, Padma Bhushan awardee Sudha Ragunathan will receive the award during the inaugural ceremony. She will also present the opening concert.

Vocalists Anjali Sriram and MS Sheela will perform on April 4, while vocalist Shri Hari Bhat and veena artiste Anuradha Madhusudhan will take the stage on April 11. The concluding concert on April 18 will feature vocalists Roopa Srikanth and Sangeeta Katti.

Managing trustee Rama Prasad SN said that to attract newer audiences, artistes are increasingly experimenting with innovative formats, including fusion of Hindustani and Carnatic music.

Shuttle van services will be provided in groups from the Silk Institute Metro Station to the venue.

Entry is free. Call 9886088869 for details.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Book release: 'Gubbigaana' and 'Angalada Dere Hoo'; Y N Gundurao and KN Bhagawan's works to be released; MS Narasimhamurthy, Madhura Karnam and N Ramanath to attend; Alilu; 10 am.

Inauguration of 450-bed speciality hospital: Siddaramaiah, DK Shivakumar and Dr Sharanaprakash Patil to attend; Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health; 11 am.

Sky observation through telescopes: Inauguration by Tribhuvan Narayan Singh; BR Guruprasad VSS Shastri to attend; Dr B R Ambedkar Sports Complex, Jalahalli; 5.15 pm.

CULTURAL

Sakha Bharatanatyam and Vajragovinda Dashavatara: Performances by Praveen Kumar, Piyal Bhattacharya and Chidakash K; ADA Rangamandira, JC Road; from 6 pm.

Theatre play: 'Kayuva Kayaka'; Written by Dundiraj; Directed by Archana Shyam; Dr C Ashwath Kalabhavana, NR Colony; 7.15 pm.

RELIGIOUS

Karaga Shaktyotsava: Special rituals at Jalakantheshwara Swamy Temple; Main event at Dharmaraya Swamy Temple premises; from 7:30 pm onwards.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	36.6°C
Minimum	20.4°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	29%
Sunset (Mar 28)	6:31 pm
Sunrise (Mar 29)	6:19 am
Moonrise	1:34 pm
Moonset	1:56 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Hawking zones, a distant dream

POLICY PARALYSIS

The efforts in the city to create formal street-vending zones have consistently failed. With the deputy CM indicating an intent, will it happen now?

SHREE D N
BENGALURU, DHNS

"The vitality of our IT parks should be reflected in the living standards of our street vendors," says the Budget speech of Bengaluru East City Corporation presented yesterday. It adds: "To economically empower street vendors within the Corporation's jurisdiction and ensure their welfare, e-vending vehicles will be distributed and development programmes will be organised."

"We will provide FSSAI training and certfication to street vendors and establish designated, hygienic food zones in every ward," promises the Bengaluru Central City corporation budget. Both corporations have allocated funds to provide e-vending vehicles to street vendors, indicating an intent to support them.

Earlier on March 20, after holding the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) executive committee meeting and the budget meeting of corporations at Vidhana Soudha, Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D K Shivakumar had announced the decision to introduce a new policy for footpaths.

"Citizens are struggling to walk on footpaths due to encroachment by street vendors. It has been decided to allocate separate spaces for vendors so that pedestrians can use the footpaths freely. Specific roads must be designated for street vending," he said.

In Bengaluru, the push to create formal hawking zones has been a long and contested process involving street vendors, civic authorities, and planning bodies such as the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT). Following the mandates of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, the city was required to identify and notify vending zones to protect vendors' livelihoods while managing traffic and public space.

DULT supported surveys, spatial mapping, and policy frameworks to integrate vending into urban mobility planning. However, delays in surveys, conflicts with local enforcement drives, and resistance from resident groups slowed implementation. There are neither official hawking zones, nor valid identity cards for hawkers in the city at present.

A pilot hawking zone formed in Sanjayanagar is still functional with some limitations. CREDIT: SUBBAIAH T S

Street vendors compete with pedestrians and vehicles for space on Avenue Road in Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

Eviction a perpetual problem

Vendors' unions and activists repeatedly pushed for transparent processes within the Town Vending Committee and legal recognition. The Act makes it clear that no one can evict a street vendor without providing an alternative space. But evictions are common, as street vendors are detested by competing shops, vehicle owners who hunt for parking, and sometimes pedestrians who want to walk in peace, avoiding traffic on the roads.

Since the BBMP was dismantled and GBA was formed with five corporations, most zones still lack official Town Vending Committees (TVCs), which play a major role in implementing the act. Since the street vendors do not have valid identity cards, the cops chase them away, says S Babu, president of the Federation of Bengaluru District Street Vendors' Association.

"There were several cases filed from Anekal, Malleshwaram, Rajajinagar, Jayanagar and other places. The court has now issued an order that under no circumstances can street vendors be evicted until alternative rehabilitation is made for them," says C E Rangaswamy, president of Karnataka Pradesh Street Vendors Association. He is one of the petitioners in the High Court of Karnataka.

So, how much more time is practically needed for Bengaluru to get vending zones? Street vendor association representatives explain the procedure.

- Under the Street Vendors Act, a Town Vending Committee (TVC) must be elected in each of the 10 zones within the GBA jurisdiction, with 40% of its members being street vendors. Joint Commissioners of the zones will head it.
- While only 27,000 street vendors have been officially identified, there are more than 1.5 lakh in the city, and fresh surveys are needed to identify them and issue ID cards.
- Cards given to the identified 27,000 vendors need to be reissued because they bear the name of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, which will likely be replaced by the local corporation or the zone. Sources say tenders need to be issued to print these ID cards.
- TVCs must meet to finalise vending zones, and steps must be taken to demarcate and establish them wherever possible. Earlier, a court directive placed the responsibility for identifying "natural markets," as defined by the Street Vendors Act, solely on the TVC.

"Deputy Chief Minister has not told anyone to evict vendors. He said they will provide specific designated places for them away from the main roads; he hasn't asked for evictions anywhere," reiterates Rangaswamy.

"Officials make a show of footpath clearance drives on social media by posting photos of clearing the shops with JCBs in an inhuman way. Why did you let them set up shops in the first place?" asks a civic volunteer who prefers anonymity.

"They must get rid of the corruption in the system. A constable pays Rs 10 lakh to get his job. How is he going to recover it? He has to go after the street vendors to get it back. Making street vendors legal by giving them ID cards will work against this corrupt system. Corruption is a vicious cycle. If we don't break it, it will continue and ruin every system," says the volunteer.

Thus, it all boils down to willpower in the administration to form hawking zones. When it comes to designing hawking zones, officials need to look no further than Bengaluru, which has a few successful examples.

The Sanjayanagar pilot

Subbaiah T S, a resident of Sanjayanagar and a member of the Citizens for Sustainability (C4S) forum, explains a pilot they conducted there four years ago. "The area had street vendors and many eateries as well. It was all unorganised, and they were cluttering the area. Traffic movement was becoming a problem."

C4S members coordinated with the 12 resident welfare associations in the area and held discussions with the street vendors to formalise a vending zone near the Radha Krishna temple and formulate guidelines for the vendors to follow.

The plan translated into action. A hawking zone was designated. A common area for washing vessels was provided. Every day, vendors had to clean up the place before they left. Separate dust bins were provided for wet and dry waste, and vendors had to maintain them. Disposable plastic usage was discouraged.

"We made it clear that the number of hawkers should not be increased anymore, and more people cannot join it. Many people from the same families were vending, which was also discouraged," explains Subbaiah.

The experiment was not without disruptions. At one point, all the hawkers had to move because some were not following the rules. Slowly, they returned to the place and started following the rules. Some vendors also shifted from street vending to formal shops.

Today, there are 15-20 vendors using the space. Facilities such as the toilet and other improvement works are pending and will be carried out in phases. The team also worked on proposing road improvements and parking regulations to free up more space for pedestrians.

Can this be considered a replicable model across the city? "The success depends on the surroundings. If you have a bylane where you can accommodate hawkers, that is good because it moves them away from the main road; they can continue their business without obstructing pedestrians or traffic," says Subbaiah.

The Whitefield experiment

A similar experiment was done in Whitefield. "We set up vending zones outside ITPL on both sides of the road before Covid. It was working well, so it should work now. The vendors are willing to do it," says Anjali Saini, a member of Whitefield Rising.

"The key is to find small sections and authorise a few vendors. For example, in front of the ITPL main gate, traffic cannot get heavy, so we planned just two vendors there — one tender coconut vendor and a juice vendor, whose customers were pedestrians, the IT park crowd and bus passengers. And it has to be very local. For example, we selected people who were from the same village area and who operated for their livelihood."

The other gate had six-seven identified vendors. The hawking zone was marked, vendors were provided with umbrellas, and benches were placed between the hawkers for customers to sit on. A single large garbage can was provided for all of them to dispose of their trash at the end of the day, and the BBMP team picked it up. Every vendor paid a garbage fee of Rs 50 per month. ID cards were given, signages were provided.

However, the pandemic disrupted everything. Anjali says this has to be done on a large scale to make an impact, and only city corporations are capable of doing it. "They know what to do. We don't have to tell them. They have to be willing to do it," she adds. The Whitefield Rising team is trying to get hawking zones again, but the officials have not yet shown much enthusiasm.

Feedback:
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METRO

'Many tested at once': CAG flags manual driving tests in state

45 Automated Driving Testing Tracks soon, says transport min

MUTHI-UR-RAHMAN SIDDIQUI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report has flagged inconsistent driving tests across Karnataka, pointing out that only 12 Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) had Automated Driving Testing Tracks (ADTTs) while 55 still used manual methods.

The CAG report, which audited state revenues for the period ending March 2024, pointed out that in manual testing centres, multiple applicants were sometimes tested simultaneously with little supervision, compromising the credibility of the tests.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, however, noted that the state has made considerable progress in the last two years and is on track to operationalise 45 ADTTs — the highest in India — over the next three or four months.

"Seventeen driving tracks are already operational and work is in advanced stages to complete another 28. We would have opened them sooner if not for court cases over sensor installation," he told *DH*.

Reddy added that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would remotely inaugurate 28 ADTTs at a function in Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru. He also reiterated plans to set up ADTTs at all 67 RTOs over the next few years.

At ADTTs, driving tests are conducted without human intervention or external pressure.

The CAG report also found that no Automated Testing Stations (ATS) had been established despite the amended Motor Vehicles Act mandating them by October 2024. Noting that vehicle fitness testing remains manual, the report showed that cross-verification with the traffic police database revealed about 18% of 3.88 lakh transport vehicles with expired Fitness Certificates (FCs) were still operating.

Reddy acknowledged the delay but assured that 32 ATSs would be up and running within a year.

"We floated tenders in five packages and issued work orders in three. We're in the process of finalising the fourth tender, while the fifth one is delayed because of litigation," he stated.

Starting October 2025, the Transport Department mandated that vehicle FCs be issued only at ATSs, moving the process away from RTOs.

Of the 32 ATSs, 13 will be established on the Develop, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis and the remaining 19 on the Build, Own and Operate (BOO) basis.

The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has established an ATS for its buses at Jadigenahalli.

An Automatic Driving Testing Track in Mysuru. DH FILE PHOTO

The CAG report further stated that between 2019 and 2024, over 47,000 vehicles remained unregistered after their temporary registration expired due to poor follow-ups, and around 29 lakh vehicles failed to renew registration after 15 years. Cross-verification with the traffic police challan database revealed that 17.33% of such vehicles were still operating, reflecting poor enforcement.

The report stated that although renewing FCs is the vehicle owner's responsibility, 3.87 lakh vehicles with FCs that had expired between April 2019 and March 2024 continued to ply on the roads, signifying that RTOs failed to ensure that only roadworthy vehicles remain in use.

It also observed that 4.7 lakh of the 14.01 lakh vehicles requiring transport permits did not have valid permits. Of these, 3.14 lakh paid quarterly taxes and 2.64 lakh visited RTOs to renew their FCs. This suggests that RTOs did not check the validity of their permits.

Wine merchants allege massive excise scam

Federation seeks probe into licence 'illegalities'

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Federation of Wine Merchants Association, Karnataka, has alleged a massive multi-crore scam within the Excise Department, citing irregularities and lapses in the management and allocation of liquor licenses spanning nearly two decades.

In a formal petition submitted to the chief secretary of the government on March 25, the association demanded an immediate high-level inquiry by a senior IAS officer.

The controversy involves the transfer of 463 retail liquor licenses (238 CL-2 and 225 CL-9) to the state-run Mysore Sales International Limited (MSIL) in 2008-09.

The Federation claims that while these licenses were officially classified as defunct or non-renewed for MSIL's use, many were simultaneously or subsequently restored for private operators in violation of state policy.

S Guruswamy, president of the Federation, highlighted significant data mismatches during the initial transfer period in 2009.

According to the petition, while the department was preparing to hand over licenses to MSIL, the total count of active private licenses in the state mysteriously increased by 44 within a 47-day window between May 15 and July 3, 2009.

"There has been a complete lack of transparency. Our findings suggest that 86 of the licenses from 21 districts purportedly given to MSIL are still active under the same names, a fact confirmed through multiple RTI queries," said general secretary of the Federation B Govindraj Hegde.

The Federation further alleged that the department has bypassed the state's 1994 ban on new private CL-2 and CL-9 licenses by validating defunct ones through back-door entries. Specifically, they pointed to a June 2019 order that allegedly regularised 125 CL-2 licenses without proper verification of the June 12, 2019, and August 2009 orders. They have also reportedly prepared an auction chart to facilitate this.

The merchants claimed that a comparative analysis of departmental lists reveals an overlap; at least 36 licenses appear simultaneously on the 2008-09 MSIL list, the 2019 validation list, and the list prepared for upcoming auctions in 2025-26.

The Federation has questioned the department's current rush to auction defunct licences, noting that while the department cites a 2013 Accountant General (AG) audit as the basis for the move, the lists being used are filled with inaccuracies.

It has requested the state government to appoint a senior IAS officer to lead an investigation into excise operations since 2008 and to stay all current orders related to the auctioning of defunct licenses until the probe is completed.

It has sought strict legal action against officials found responsible for mismanaging the state's licencing database.

"We are prepared to provide supporting documents to investigators to prove the culpability of the officers involved," the Federation added.

They stated that they are ready to submit these documents to the Lokayukta or any other investigating agency.

LHB coaches for 3 more pairs of trains

BENGALURU, DHNS: The South Western Railway (SWR) is introducing LHB coaches for three more pairs of trains.

The Mysuru-KSR Bengaluru Wodeyar Express (12613) and the KSR Bengaluru–Talaguppa Express (20651) were converted to LHB coaches on Thursday, the KSR Bengaluru-Dharwad-Siddaganga Express (12725) and the Talaguppa–KSR Bengaluru Express (20652) on Friday, while the KSR Bengaluru–Mysuru Wodeyar Express (12614) and the KSR Bengaluru-Dharwad Siddaganga Express (12726) will get them on Saturday, according to the SWR.

LHB, or Linke-Hofmann-Busch, coaches are known for better passenger safety and comfort. Made from stainless steel, these coaches have better suspension, wider windows and come with biotoilets.

Indian Railways is introducing LHB coaches to replace those made by Integral Coach Factory (ICF).

One of the trains with LHB coaches. SWR

Mysuru to get regional drug testing laboratory

BENGALURU, DHNS: A regional drug testing laboratory will be established in Mysuru, the state government announced on Friday.

Currently, Mysuru is the only revenue division without a testing laboratory. Drug samples from Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu, Udupi, Mysuru, Mandya and Chamarajanagar are currently being sent to Bengaluru for testing. The new laboratory is being set up to ensure that the testing can be done in Mysuru, the Health and Family Welfare Department said.

The department will use the current workforce and equipment of the Food Safety and Drug Administration Department laboratory in Mysuru.

The new lab will require 15 people who will be transferred from Bengaluru, Hubballi and Ballari labs. Other equipment will also be transferred from the same labs, the department said.

Recover 444-acre forest land from Indian Air Force, Khandre tells officials

BENGALURU, DHNS: Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre has directed officials to issue a notice to the authorities of the Indian Air Force (IAF), which is in possession of 444 acres of land in Srigandhada Kaval at Jarakabande in north Bengaluru.

In a letter to the Additional Chief Secretary, Khandre referred to a matter brought to the fore by opposition leader R Ashoka, directing the initiation of eviction proceedings under Section 64A of the Karnataka Forest Act.

He said Ashoka had raised the matter of Indian Air Force encroaching upon the "reserved forest" in the Legislative Assembly on March 23.

"He (Ashoka) had urged the clearing of this encroachment. I have answered that the chief secretary had, on September 15, 2018, written to the defence secretary suggesting that an application for regularisation of the land under its possession under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 would be filed," the letter said.

Ashoka had said that the IAF had failed to regularise the land and urged the department to recover the same.

LPG crisis: Forest dept halts firewood bulk auction

Measure to prevent hoarding; domestic buyers exempted

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The prevailing uncertainty over liquified petroleum gas (LPG) supply has prompted the forest department to suspend the auction of firewood to prevent hoarding and as a precaution to meet fuel needs of hostels, residential schools, university canteens and individual consumers in urgent need.

The forest department has 39 regular depots and several temporary ones in case of firewood felled far away from regular depots. All material is sold through online auction. In a circular dated March 18, the department directed division level officers to temporarily suspend the auction of firewood and halt any such auction procedure underway in view of a possible demand in the future.

While making an exception for domestic buyers, the circular directed officials to keep the future requirements of anganwadis, hostels and other such establishments while proceeding with the sale of firewood.

The auction of teak and other valued timber will not be affected. "This is purely a precautionary measure taken in the best interest of sections that will be affected the most, from anganwadis to hostels. However, the department is ready to meet the needs of individual buyers, even hotels. It will be sold at the prevailing retail price," Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) Meenakshi Negi told *DH*.

Over the last two weeks, many hotels and commercial establishments have made arrangements to use firewood for cooking needs while those without such options have scaled down operations in view of the short supply of the commercial LPG.

"We are not getting about 33% of our LPG demand. The government has promised to increase it by another 10% and a meeting in this regard is scheduled on Monday. We have already requested the chief secretary to ensure availability of firewood from the forest department. Right now, existing stock and scrap wood from carpentry is meeting our demands," said P C Rao of the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association.

Hoteliers in the city said the price of firewood has slightly reduced after the exorbitant rates of last week. Prior to the attack on Iran, firewood was sold at about Rs 40 per 10 kg.

Arun Adiga, managing partner of the iconic Vidyarthi Bhavan, said he had to go purchase firewood as only about 30% of his LPG requirement was met.

"We need 30-35 cylinders per week. I got 10 in the last one week. We have managed to keep things running because we adopted several measures, starting from shifting to a ceramic burner that consumes 40% less LPG to conversion of an LPG burner into a firewood burner for making dosas. Also, we have relied on induction stove to cook khara bath, kesari bath and vada," he said.

Adiga said at one point, he had to pay Rs 40 for one kg of firewood in Chamarajpet in the last week. "In the last few days, it fell to Rs 30 per kg and yesterday it came down to Rs 20 a kg," he added.

HC tells ISEC to issue fresh advertisement for director's post

BENGALURU, DHNS: The high court has directed the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) and its Board of Governors (BOG) to issue a fresh advertisement calling for applications to the post of director of ISEC in conformity with the January 30, 2025, public notice.

Justice S R Krishna Kumar passed this order while allowing the petition filed by Dr C M Lakshmana seeking directions for setting aside the July 26, 2025, advertisement.

The petitioner contended that the ISEC and BOG issued the notification calling for applications to the post of the director by prescribing qualifications and experience which are not in conformity with the qualifications and experience provided for appointment to the post of the vice chancellor of Karnatak University, Dharwad, which was expressly adopted by the ISEC and the BOG on March 1, 2025.

The petitioner consequently prayed for a direction to permit him to apply for the post of director of ISEC.

The court noted that a combined reading of the decision taken by the BOG and the qualification and experience prescribed for selection of the vice-chancellor of Karnatak University by the state government is sufficient to conclude the minimum qualification and experience for the post of a director.

The qualification would be a distinguished academician, with a minimum of 10 years' experience as a professor in a University or 10 years of experience in a reputed research and/or academic administrative organisation, with proof of having demonstrated academic leadership.

The court noted that the minimum qualification and experience prescribed in the July 26, 2025, advertisement are in contrast with the qualifications and experience approved earlier.

"I am of the considered opinion that the impugned advertisement to the extent of the same prescribing qualification and experience for appointment to the post of the director of respondent numbers 2 and 3 (ISEC) deserves to be quashed and the same be substituted with the qualification and experience prescribed for the Karnatak University, Dharwad," the court said.

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Fuel prices: Surjewala slams Modi over 'Rs 43 lakh crore loot'

BENGALURU, DHNS

All India Congress Committee general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala on Friday alleged massive "loot" by the Narendra Modi government through taxation on petrol and diesel over the last 11 years.

Addressing a joint press meet with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KPCC president D K Shivakumar in Bengaluru, Surjewala said, "11 years of Modi government equals Rs 43 lakh crore loot. The Modi government has fleeced Rs 1,000 crore per day by taxing petrol and diesel."

"In May 2014, petrol was Rs 71.41 per litre and diesel Rs 56.71. Today, petrol is Rs 102.96 and diesel Rs 90.99 in Bengaluru. Based on crude prices, petrol should be Rs 61.60 and diesel Rs 56.99, the rest is sheer BJP loot," said Surjewala, adding the Centre had imposed an average excise duty of Rs 19.70 per litre on petrol and Rs 15.50 on diesel, forcing people to pay 25% and 22.1% of prices as tax.

The reduction of duty from Rs 13 to Rs 10 on petrol and Rs 10 to zero on diesel is a sleight of hand, said Surjewala adding that not a single rupee of Rs 3,60,000 crore annually thus saved would go to common man, but to Nayara Energy and Reliance.

Referring to Nayara Energy hiking petrol by Rs 5.30 per litre and diesel by Rs 3 per litre, Surjewala said it was a "prelude" to the imminent hike in fuel prices after the conclusion of elections on April 9 and 23.

"Price of LPG cylinder increased from Rs 412 in May 2014 to Rs 913 in March 2026, an increase of Rs 501 or 121.6%. Instead of looting the nation and its people, the Modi government must provide relief."

KPCC chief D K Shivakumar said the Centre was discriminating against South Indian states, the non-BJP ruled states and alleged that both oil tankers were sent to the Gujarat coast but not to South despite the fuel crisis.

Comm taxes offices open on March 30

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Commercial Taxes Department's offices will remain open on March 30 in view of the closure of the financial year 2025-26, though it is a public holiday for Mahaveer Jayanti.

JOB ASPIRANTS ON STREETS

Students and job aspirants, under the banner of Akhila Karnataka State Students Association, stage a massive protest demanding the government to fill vacancies in various departments, in Kalaburagi on Friday. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

Ex-speaker accused of gifting land under dispute

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Amid allegations that authorities are not evicting former speaker K R Ramesh Kumar from allegedly encroached lands due to political pressure, documents show the senior Congress leader has gifted four acres of the disputed land to his daughter-in-law. The forest department has written to the revenue authorities warning that allowing the land transfer amounts to contempt of a Karnataka High Court order.

In September 2025, hearing a petition by Ramesh Kumar challenging the notice issued by the Forest Department, the high court ordered status quo but allowed the department to issue a fresh notice and provide an opportunity to the petitioner before passing orders in the matter of encroachments in Hosahudya village, Rayalpad hobli, Srinivasapura taluk of Kolar district.

However, the forest department has now flagged to the sub-registrar of Srinivasapura as well as the tahsildar and assistant commissioner of a violation of the status quo. The forest authorities said Ramesh Kumar has executed a gift deed on March 16 to transfer four acre in new survey number 47 to his daughter-in-law Pruthvi Krishnamurthy.

"The deputy commissioner's enquiry report states that of the 4 acre in survey number 47, 2 acre 4 gunta was forest and 1 acre 36 gunta is revenue land... Any change in the records pertaining to these lands is in violation of the High Court order as well as the law," the department said, noting that proceedings were underway to evict encroachment of 60 acre and 23 gunta in the area.

MLA alleges pressure

In a letter dated March 25, Srinivasapura MLA G K Venkatashivareddy wrote to Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre alleging of a conspiracy to help Ramesh Kumar retain encroached land while the joint survey has confirmed encroachment. He said senior IAS officers were being used to start a proceedings under Section 19(2) of Karnataka Forest Act to change the boundary of the forest land notified as far back as 1944 to help Ramesh Kumar.

Repeated violations

Advocate K V Shiva Reddy, whose earlier petition to the high court had pushed the department to act against Ramesh Kumar, said the gift deed was completely illegal in light of the pending eviction proceedings.

"The appeal against eviction notice has been heard and orders are pending in the court of the chief conservator of forest. Transferring the land to his daughter-in- law in the name of gift deed is completely illegal considering that the high court has ordered status quo. Previously, he had tried to mortgage the land and we had demanded that department ensure it won't happen," he said.

In a letter written to Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Reddy noted that the forest department has so far recovered 3,000 acres of the 10,000 acre forest land. "Certain political leaders are reportedly encouraging protests against forest officials and obstructing their lawful duties. Disturbingly, instead of controlling such unlawful activities, the district administration has on several occasions publicly criticised forest officials...Encroachers who were evicted over the last two years are now threatening to re-enter and re-occupy the same forest lands," he said.

Ramesh Kumar and Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre could not be reached for comment.

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Rajesh Chaudhary
MLA, Mant
Jaiveer Singh
MLA, Barauli
Narendra Singh Bhati
MLC
Shrichand Sharma
MLC
and other dignitaries
Date: 28th March, 2026 | Time: 11:30 AM | Venue: Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh
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Addl flights to B'luru from Navi Mumbai airport

NAVI MUMBAI, DHNS

Bengaluru will get additional flights to the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) at Ulwe in Raigad district as Mumbai's second airport announced its first summer schedule.

Effective from March 29 to October 24, the NMIA is expanding its domestic network to 46 destinations.

The schedule adds 30 new domestic routes, linking the airport to a mix of commercial, tourism and religious centres across India.

Among Indian cities, Delhi (9), Goa (7), Bengaluru (6) and Cochin (5) will have the largest share of daily departures, followed closely by Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Varanasi and Indore.

Three Indian carriers—IndiGo, Akasa Air and Air India Express—will operate additional flights from the airport during this period, increasing capacity and network coverage.

Flight operations are expected to scale up to 1,092 weekly air traffic movements, with an average of 156 movements per day, an NMIA spokesperson said.

Average daily departures are projected to rise from 22 at launch to 78 by April 2026. NMIA, which began commercial operations on December 25, 2025, is ramping up capacity under its first summer schedule.

The expansion is expected to improve connectivity across Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities and support rising passenger demand in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), one of India's largest urban and economic hubs.

The NMIA was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 8, 2025, and it started commercial operations on December 25, 2025.

Smoke billows out from a forest under fire in Bailur wildlife range, Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple Tiger Reserve, in Chamarajanagar district. DH PHOTO

Vast tracts of forest destroyed in wildfire

HANUR (CHAMARAJANAGAR DISTRICT), DHNS: Vast tracts of forest were destroyed in a wildfire at Biligiri Rangantha Swamy Tiger Reserve, in Chamarajanagar district, on Thursday.

The fire was first sighted near Gundimala, Bailur Wildlife Range, under Malai Mahadeshwara Hill limits. The Forest and Fire and Emergency Services department personnel rushed to the spot and doused the flames. But, vegetation on several acres was gutted by then.

More than 40 dried bamboo plants were destroyed in fire near Gundimala village. According to the Forest department officials, the fire was doused immediately after it came to their notice.

As there were firelines, the fire did not spread widely, averting a huge mishap, they said.

Snare laid for boars kills two-year-old male tiger

MYSURU, DHNS

A male tiger, aged two to two-and-a-half years, has died after getting trapped in a snare laid for pigs, boars or other animals, at Agasanahundi village of H D Kote taluk, Mysuru district, around 300 metre from Metikuppe range of Nagarahole Tiger Reserve (NTR).

According to Forest department officials, the incident may have occurred likely on Wednesday night.

The incident came to light after local people noticed it around 11 am on Friday.

After receiving information, officials of the Forest department rushed to the spot, conducted an autopsy as per National Tiger Conservation Authority norms and cremated it. It was injured in the neck and chest, officials said.

NTR wildlife veterinarian Dr Ramesh and Dr Prasanna conducted the autopsy.

NTR director P A Seema, ACF Madhu, ARFO Rashmi, NTCA nominee Thammaiah, Chief WildLife Warden's nominee Ravindra, and Grama Panchayat president Girish were present.

In November 2022, a male tiger cub, aged around 10 to 11 months, died due to a snare at Taraka forest area, near Dammanakatte, under Antharasanthe wildlife range of Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, according to NTR officials.

Anti-snare drive: Khandre

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre, who was briefed about the incident, said there appears to be negligence on the part of the officials in conducting anti-snare drives and sought to know if there have been lapses on the part of the department.

"Despite repeated directions, there seems to be, prima facie, negligence in removing snares. A team led by the chief conservator of forester will probe whether there has been lapses in beat patrolling in the area. We will also initiate action against those who installed the snare and conduct anti-snare drive in the farm lands near forests," he said.

Sub-registrar offices to work today, tomorrow

▸ **BENGALURU, DHNS:** The sub-registrar offices across the state will work on March 28 (Saturday) and 29 (Sunday), a Revenue Department notification said.

The decision was taken in view of the public holiday for Mahavir Jayanti being shifted to March 30 instead of March 31.

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CHANGE OF NAME
I, **KARTHIK** S/o DR. H.K. VASUDEV, R/a G-2, Shivaganga Maharani Apartment, AGS Layout Main Road, 2nd Main, Near Sarvagna Circle, Arehalli, Chikkalasandra, Bangalore-560061. I have changed my name to **KARTHIK H. V.** (Expansion of initials - Hullenahalli Vasudev) Vide affidavit dated 27.03.2026 sworn before Notary V.Rangaraju, Bangalore.

I, MOHANA KUMAR PRAKASH resident of Aralepete, Ward no.16, Basaveshwara Temple, Chickballapur 562101 have changed my name to MOHAN KUMAR PRAKASH Vide Affidavit dated 26.03.2026 sworn before advocate and notary K.H. Venkatappa, Chickaballapur.

I, NATARAJ RAMANNA, resident of No. 4, 2nd Cross, Behind Sir. M.V. Stadium, Kelaginathote, H.S.Garden, Chickballapur-562101 have changed my name to NATARAJA RAMANNA Vide Affidavit dated 26.03.2026 sworn before advocate and notary K.H. Venkatappa, Chickaballapur.

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IPL tickets: BYV, Surya disagree with Ashoka, slam 'VIP culture'

It exposes VIP mindset that sees public office as entitlement: Surya

BENGALURU, DHNS

A day after Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka and other MLAs sought IPL match tickets, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra and Bangalore South MP L S Tejasvi Surya took a different view and called out the "VIP culture."

Ashoka, Congress MLA Vijayanand Kashappanavar and BJP MLA Abhay Patil had sought tickets for MLAs, which was also supported by Speaker U T Khader.

Speaking to reporters about this, Vijayendra said: "It's definitely not a good development if an MLA or a people's representative is seen as a VIP or different from common people. I am not in favour of this."

The BJP state president added that he personally "disagreed" with the opinion of ruling and opposition party MLAs who had sought tickets.

"...Last year, due to the ruling party's foolishness, 11 innocent people lost their lives. People of the state and the country haven't forgotten it. In such a situation, I don't understand why such statements were needed.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Surya echoed a similar sentiment.

"Had the Karnataka MLAs spent time in the Vidhana Soudha discussing safety and security preparedness for IPL fans, it would have upheld the dignity of the House. Instead, we saw MLAs pleading and even threatening for free tickets for themselves and their families. This is not just poor priority. It exposes a deeper problem - a VIP mindset that sees public office as entitlement."

TEJASVI SURYA
Bangalore South MP

"We saw MLAs pleading and even threatening for free tickets for themselves and their families. This is not just poor priority. It exposes a deeper problem - a VIP mindset that sees public office as entitlement.

R ASHOKA
Leader of Opposition

"That's his personal opinion. The state government has given them land. The monthly rent is Rs 1,600. The MLAs won't go – I haven't gone myself. I give the tickets I get to the public and our workers.

'I don't need it'

Responding to Surya's opinion, Ashoka said: "That's his personal opinion. The state government has given them land. The monthly rent is Rs 1,600. The MLAs won't go – I haven't gone myself. I give the tickets I get to the public and our workers. People ask us for tickets and people from all parties sought tickets."

Each lawmaker to get 2 tickets...

IPL tickets, From Page 1

The chief minister's office released a photo showing Prasad, the KSCA president, standing with folded hands in front of a seated Siddaramaiah. This drew sharp reactions on social media.

"A national icon like Venkatesh Prasad, a man who brought pride to India, whose spells against Pakistan are etched permanently in our collective memory, is today standing with folded hands before a CM. Why? Not for any wrongdoing. Not for any failure of duty. But simply because he did his job," Bangalore South BJP MP Tejasvi Surya said.

"A political class that sees power as entitlement, not responsibility should go. A system where excellence bows, and arrogance sits should go. A new generation of political class is badly needed at all levels," Surya said. "For whatever it is worth, I stand with Venkatesh Prasad. And I know, millions will."

95,000 letters: Priyank launches pro-MGNREGA campaign

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rural Development Minister Priyank Kharge on Friday launched a statewide awareness camapaign by sending 95,000 letters to current and former gram panchayat members on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The campaign will highlight key differences between the MGNREGA and the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act.

Thousands of letters will be dispatched daily raising concerns over the impact of the VB-G RAM G Act on rural livelihoods and panchayat economy, Priyank said in a statement.

"MGNREGA is not just a scheme — it is a legal guarantee that has protected the dignity and livelihoods of millions of rural families. Any shift away from its rights-based framework raises serious concerns for workers, particularly women, and for the future of decentralized governance," Priyank said.

The letters being sent to representatives outline the differences between the two frameworks and encourage informed engagement at the grassroots level, Priyank said.

Chief secretary reviews safety measures ahead of inaugural IPL match

BENGALURU, DHNS

As IPL 2026 is set to begin with its inaugural match on Saturday at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in the city, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh held a meeting with senior officials and gave them safety instructions.

The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) Board of Directors, office-bearers, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) office-bearers, City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh, GBA Commissioner M Maheswar Rao, BMRCL MD J Ravishankar and heads of various departments concerned took part in the meeting.

The chief secretary was briefed about the security arrangements made inside and around the stadium for the safety of cricket lovers, changes made in the city's traffic system, parking arrangements, drinking water inside the stadium and other essential things.

Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh holds a meeting with senior officials, including GBA commissioner M Maheshwar Rao and City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh in connection with the safety arrangements made for the IPL opening match at Chinnaswamy stadium, in Bengaluru on Friday.

"She obtained information from the officials about the density of passengers falling on the metro, the metro running schedule, the additional security provided at the metro stations, and safety, and gave many instructions to be careful not to allow even a minor unpleasant incident," as per an official statement.

"She instructed the officials and all those concerned authorities to strictly follow the conditions and precautionary measures imposed by the government for organising the tournament. She gave instructions that the officials concerned and organisations should be on high alert, and also she gave instructions that the relevant information should be exchanged with the above officials regularly," the statement said.

Congress rebel Pailwan backs off from Davangere South contest

He has decided to stand by the party candidate: DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS

The ruling Congress that grappled with dissent from minority leaders over its decision to field Samarth, grandson of late Shamanur Shivashankarappa, in the Davangere South bypoll, has finally managed in persuading rebel candidate Sadiq Pailwan to back out.

The party had sent legislators Rizwan Arshad and Saleem Ahmed to Davangere to pacify the rebel and to avert a division of Muslim vote. Pailwan has not formally withdrawn his nomination, as the last date for withdrawal was March 26.

Addressing a joint press conference, KPCC chief D K Shivakumar said, "Pailwan is a loyal Congressman. His bond with Shivashankarappa was like that of Rama and Lakshmana. He has decided to stand by the party candidate. We value his loyalty, discipline and sacrifices. He retired unconditionally."

Pailwan said it was a homecoming. "When two brothers develop differences in a family, elders mediate. Similarly, today I was pacified by party leaders. Shamanur Shivashankarappa was my political mentor. The minority community will stand shoulder to shoulder with other Ahinda leaders and ensure the party's victory with a huge margin. We will send Samarth to the Assembly," he said.

CM Siddaramaiah said Pailwan had applied for the ticket and hence, remained in the fray. "I could not go to Davangere yesterday as I had a Budget reply. Rizwan and Saleem could pacify him, but it was past the deadline to withdraw," said Siddaramaiah.

"Pailwan did not get the ticket though there are 70,000 Muslim voters in the constituency because Congress follows a system of giving tickets to a deceased incumbent's family member. In Bagalkot too, we gave it to late H Y Meti's son," said Siddaramaiah and recalled watching wrestler Pailwan at Chennayya Kushti Akhada in Mysuru.

JD(S) releases campaigners' list for byelections

BENGALURU, DHNS

Despite the reports about differences in the BJP-JD(S) alliance, the regional party has decided to campaign for BJP candidates in Davangere and Bagalkot byelections.

The party has released a list of 40 leaders, which includes Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, to campaign for its alliance partners.

Some of the prominent leaders chosen the campaigning in bypolls are MLAs H D Revanna, Suresh Babu C B, Sharanagouda Kandakur, Sharada Puryanaik, Karemma G Nayak, Member of the Parliament Mallesh Babu M, MLCs S L Bhoje Gowda, T A Sharavna and Youth JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy.

Though JD(S) has no strong political presence in both the bypoll-bound Bagalkot and Davangere constituencies, it can still get some crucial votes for the saffron party nominees.

In the 2023 Assembly elections to Bagalkot, the JD(S) candidate managed to secure 3,470 votes even as BJP's Veeranna Charantimath lost to Congress' H Y Meti by a slender margin of 5,878 votes

Meanwhile, according to the sources, JD(S) leaders are miffed with the BJP state leaders as they were not consulted while finalising candidates for MLC elections.

"During his recent meeting with BJP high command leaders, Kumaraswamy has expressed his displeasure over the way state BJP leaders are treating them," said a source.

Entry of HDK into state politics inevitable: Nikhil

JD(S) state youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy has said that entry of his father and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy into state politics has become inevitable for the well-being of people of Karnataka, reports DHNS from Mysuru. "He should become CM. This is not only my opinion, but that of the people of entire state," he said. Nikhil was speaking at a party workers' meeting and membership enrolment drive, held as part of state-wide 'Janarondige Janatha Dala' campaign, in HD Kote of Mysuru district, on Friday. Nikhil said, "I am confident that the candidates of the JD(S)-BJP alliance will win in Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat elections."

ACJ alumna Pratibha Rawal appointed Nepal's federal affairs minister

BENGALURU, DHNS: Pratibha Rawal, an alumna of Asian College of Journalism (ACJ), Chennai, has been appointed the Minister for Federal Affairs and General Administration in the newly formed Nepalese cabinet.

Pratibha Rawal

Rawal, 32, who was part of the 2014-2015 batch at the journalism institute, transitioned from a high-profile career in media to politics, representing the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP). Her appointment has sparked a wave of congratulatory messages from the ACJ community and the journalism fraternity in India and Nepal.

One of her classmates at ACJ told *DH* that she was deeply interested in and well-informed about politics. "Her knowledge of national, international, and state affairs was incredibly in-depth. She was a keen learner who held strong, well-reasoned opinions on various issues. This intellectual curiosity is clearly what was nurtured over the years," the classmate added.

A resident of Kanchanpur in Nepal's Sudurpashchim province, Rawal worked with Republica daily and South Asia Check during her decade-long stint in journalism. She gained nationwide fame as the host of 'Lalmohar' on Galaxy 4K Television, a programme known for holding policymakers accountable.

"My mother's sacrifice and her belief in the power of education brought me here. I intend to prove my worth through my work," Rawal stated following her appointment.

VIT scores high in QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026

Rising global rankings

Subject	World rank	India rank
Computer Science and information Systems:	86	6
Electrical and Electronics Engineering:	87	6
Data Science and Artificial Intelligence:	101-200	7
Engineering and Technology:	119	6

Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) has achieved a significant milestone in the recently-published QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, with record number of subjects breaking into the top 200 ranking in the world. With 17 subjects ranked globally, VIT is rapidly closing the gap with global education leaders through major improvements in engineering, technology, sciences, management, agriculture and design.

Engineering and Technology remains the forte of VIT and is ranked 119, moving up 23 places from last year where it was ranked 142. In Engineering and Technology, VIT has moved to the sixth rank in India. In Mathematics, it has secured the fifth rank.

In Computer Science and Information Systems, Electrical and Electronics, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, Mechanical, Aeronautical and Manufacturing, VIT has achieved the sixth, seventh and eighth ranks respectively in India.

For the first time, two subjects – Computer Science Engineering (86) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (87) have broken into the top 100 rankings in the world. Other programmes that feature in the top 200 are Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (101-200), Mechanical Engineering (148), Mathematics (104) and Material Science (137). Art and Design (201-300) and Civil Engineering (201-275) are the new entrants this year.

Other branches that are ranked include Chemical Engineering (201-250), Chemistry (251-300), Physics (251-300), Statistics and Operational Research (251-275), Biological Sciences (351-350), Agriculture (401-475) and Business and Management (451-500).

Dr G Viswanathan, Chancellor, VIT, said, "The improvement in rankings reflects our unwavering pursuit of excellence across teaching, research and global engagement. It is a proud moment for our entire community - faculty, staff, students and alumni - whose collective efforts have made this progress possible. The improved ranking highlights VIT's continued investment in cutting-edge research, industry collaborations and a future-focused curriculum designed to prepare students for a rapidly-evolving world.

Curated by DH Brandspot

Indecisiveness on internal quota may dent Cong's prospects in bypolls

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Having deferred a decision on including internal reservation in the ongoing recruitment process for 56,432 jobs until the byelections are over, the ruling Congress has the challenging task of winning over the Madiga/SC (Left) community, which has significant numbers in both Davangere and Bagalkot constituencies.

The internal reservation issue has divided the SC community. While the Holeya/SC (Right), Lambani, Bhovi, Korma and Korcha communities have favoured the current recruitment plan, the Madiga community has sought recruitment including internal reservation. The government postponed the special Cabinet meeting scheduled on March 27, citing the model code of conduct in the two bypoll-bound constituencies as a hurdle.

Traditionally, Madigas have significant numbers in both Bagalkot and Davangere districts. As per the Nagamohan Das Commission's report on internal reservation (submitted to the government on August 04, 2025), Madigas comprise 1.27 lakh of the 3.53 lakh SC population in Davangere district, while their numbers form 1.11 lakh of the 3.70 lakh SC population in Bagalkot district.

According to Congress sources, there are around 30,000-35,000 Madiga community electors in the Davangere South constituency, which has around 2.31 lakh voters.

Sources in both Congress and BJP noted that the Madigas were the largest SC bloc in the Bagalkot constituency. As per BJP estimates, there are around 41,000-43,000 SC voters, of which around 30,000-32,000 are from the Madiga community.

The stakes are particularly high in Bagalkot, which witnessed a reasonably tight fight in 2023, when the late H Y Meti won the elections by a margin of 5,878 votes.

A senior Congress leader from the Madiga community acknowledged that there was a risk of the community not voting for the party if leaders did not convince effectively.

H Anjaneya, former social welfare minister and one of the eminent Madiga leaders in the Congress, told *DH* that internal reservation was the "6th guarantee" of the Congress.

"Internal reservation will be provided after April 9. There's no need to worry. We will get justice. By voting in even higher numbers and making our candidates victorious, we should seek internal reservation," Anjaneya added.

'Community leadership needed'

Former union minister and BJP leader A Narayanaswamy, who also hails from the Madiga community, noted that the saffron party could gain an advantage only if community leaders are given leadership roles.

"It all depends on how the community leaders are given an opportunity. Not all politics is possible through money alone. Communities have their own leadership and connect. Only when local leaders are taken along, will the votes get converted."

Internal quota activists resolve to defeat Cong

BENGALURU, DHNS:

A group of internal reservation activists on Friday slammed the state government's decision to postpone the state Cabinet meeting as a "major betrayal," and claimed that they had resolved to defeat Congress candidates in Davangere South and Bagalkot constituencies.

"In the byelections announced in Davangere and Bagalkot, the internal reservation activists have decided to defeat candidates of the Congress party which has betrayed this movement. We appeal to all conscious citizens of Karnataka who have supported this demand for social justice over the past 35 years to support our stand," the activists said in a press release.

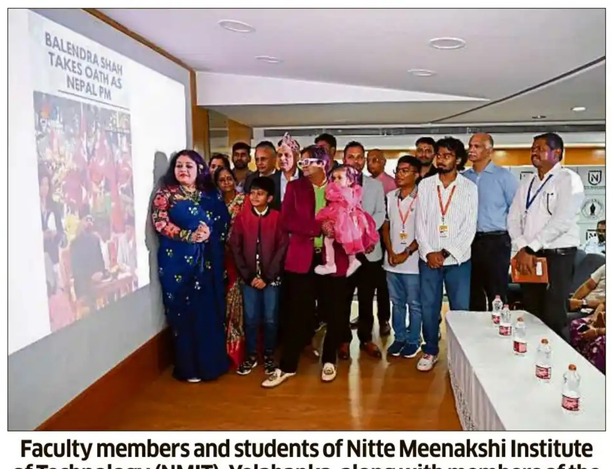
The activists urged the government not to celebrate the birth anniversaries of leaders like Dr B R Ambedkar and Babu Jagjivan Ram.

"Communities will celebrate these great leaders on their own. If the government attempts to organize celebrations, including those in front of Vidhana Soudha and at district levels, internal reservation activists will stage protests and lay siege."

B'luru college, Nepalese people celebrate alumnus' rise

B K JANARDHAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Faculty members and students of Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology (NMIT), Yelahanka, along with members of the Nepalese in Bengaluru (NIB) community, gathered on Thursday to watch the oath-taking ceremony of Nepal's Prime Minister, Balendra Shah. The event celebrated the rise of a former student and the enduring strength of Indo-Nepal friendship.



Faculty members and students of Nitte Meenakshi Institute of Technology (NMIT), Yelahanka, along with members of the Nepalese in Bengaluru (NIB) community, watch the oath-taking ceremony of Nepal's Prime Minister, Balendra Shah, on Thursday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

The screening, held at the NMIT campus, was organised as a joint initiative between the college and the local Nepali diaspora. Faculty, students, invited guests, and family members of Shah attended the event, describing it as a proud milestone for the institution.

Speaking to *DH*, Sreejesh, a second-year Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) student at NMIT, said: "I am excited to see a young leader I can relate to become the Prime Minister. Studying in the same college as him is a privilege not many enjoy. I'm very proud."

"We have written a congratulatory letter to Balen Shah. This is a proud moment for the college," said H C Nagaraj, Principal of NMIT.

"He completed his MTech in Structural Engineering at our Bengaluru campus between 2016 and 2018 while staying in the hostel. He was an excellent student with a CGPA above 9. I interacted with him a few times and he was always very focused. He was also deeply interested in music, especially rapping, during his student days. We expect him to contribute greatly to society and do his best for his country. We wish him the very best."

Shah's brother-in-law, Harish Kumar Sejekan, an entrepreneur and art connoisseur told *DH* "I am extremely proud and full of emotion. I'm could not travel to Kathmandu today due to my son's exams, but I wish my brother-in-law all the very best. He has not only made us proud but has given new hope to many."

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

Rare justice on custodial torture

Custodial torture and killings have remained a blemish on India's policing system, with the numbers showing no decline over the years. The conviction of nine policemen for the custodial killing of a man and his son at Sathankulam, in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district, is rare and, therefore, significant. Police picked up the duo in 2020 for allegedly violating Covid lockdown norms; they had kept their shop open beyond the scheduled hours. Relatives were denied access to the men, who were declared dead at a hospital a few days later. The CBI, which investigated the case, found that the two were subjected to prolonged and extreme torture, and medical aid was delayed and inadequate. There were no cases against them; the brutal killings occurred only because of the policemen's sense of authority.

Custodial and encounter killings are the two most gruesome and illegal forms of police excess. In 2025-26 (till March 15), 170 custodial death cases were reported across the country, according to information the Union government provided to Parliament this week. It has been reported that the annual figure for the past five years ranged between 140 and 176. The official number of cases involving torture is widely seen as an underestimation. A strikingly low conviction rate has enabled this cycle of violence. Between 2017 and 2022, more than 11,000 people were reported dead while in police custody. No policeman was convicted during the period. This history of acquittals makes the Sathankulam ruling an important turn in the judicial response to custodial torture.

The Sathankulam conviction is a little step forward in breaking the cycle of systemic impunity

A view favouring extra-judicial punishment has gained ground. Sections of police personnel and the public share this view, amplified by the failure and delays in delivering justice. Overworked, undertrained, and stressed, India's police force has signalled serious vulnerabilities. But these systemic failings cannot justify the use of violence in custody, which grossly violates the rule of law and human rights. It is no coincidence that victims in most cases are from the marginalised sections of society, such as Dalits, minorities, and the poor. The Supreme Court has taken serious note of custodial torture and killings in multiple rulings and issued guidelines for police conduct. But the number of cases reveals a limited impact on station procedures. A lawful and civilised society demands respect for the life and rights of every citizen. Every custodial killing is a blot on this sense of balance. The Sathankulam conviction is welcome, but it remains an exception.

MLAs' mandate: A ticket to entitlement

The recent proceedings of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly offered a rare spectacle: legislators cutting across party lines, united not over the pressing problems facing the state, but over access to Indian Premier League (IPL) tickets. That this demand was triggered by the Leader of the Opposition, R Ashoka, makes it even more disquieting for what it signals about priorities. The Opposition leader sets the tone for debates, frames the issues that deserve legislative attention, and holds the government to account. To expend that political capital on something as trivial as ticket quotas is a serious abdication of responsibility. Members were quick to rally behind the demand, with Vijayanand Kashappanavar (Congress) asserting that legislators are "VIPs" who cannot be expected to queue like ordinary citizens. The sentiment cut across party lines, even as Abhay Patil (BJP) raised a valid concern about black marketing and the disproportionately low fees paid by the Karnataka State Cricket Association – just Rs 1,600 a month for 16.32 acres of prime public land it occupies – despite the enormous revenues generated during matches. However, Ashoka's demand to tighten the screws by targeting liquor licences and excise clearances of the KSCA and the affiliated club is nothing short of arm-twisting. Governance cannot be reduced to coercive leverage for private gain; such remarks verge on institutional blackmail.

Legislators' demand for IPL ticket quotas signals a culture of privilege and a troubling sense of priority

Speaker U T Khader's directive to provide four tickets each to legislators only compounds the problem. With 224 MLAs and 75 MLCs, the total requirement balloons to nearly 1,200 tickets. Accommodating such numbers within the limited premium seating at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium would inevitably mean displacing paying spectators and corporate sponsors, undermining both fairness and revenue. This is part of a pattern. Recent demands for VIP lanes at toll plazas and privileged access to elite clubs point to a growing culture of entitlement, under the guise of preserving "dignity".

Most disturbingly, this debate unfolds in the shadow of a tragedy. Eleven lives were lost during last year's RCB victory celebrations, and despite multiple inquiries, there has been no closure, no accountability, no punishment. None of this is to deny that the government must crack down on black marketing or revisit concessional land terms. Those are legitimate issues. But they cannot be pursued as a means to secure VIP access for legislators. The directive on ticket allocation sends the wrong signal and must be withdrawn. In a democracy, legislators are servants of the people and cannot be treated as more equal than those who elect them.

TRADE AMID DISORDER

In a fractured world, WTO matters more than ever

Geopolitical tensions make the organisation's role critical. Can it adapt and reclaim credibility?

JADHAV CHAKRADHAR

At the World Trade Organisation's 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) underway in Yaoundé, Cameroon, trade ministers are confronting a global economy that looks far more anxious, divided, and unpredictable than the one the WTO was created to govern. The institution was built on a powerful idea: that rules-based trade could reduce barriers and temper conflict among nations. Today, that idea is under strain.

Donald Trump's return to the White House, rising tariff threats, wars, sanctions, supply-chain disruptions, and deepening geopolitical mistrust have transformed the global trade landscape. In many capitals, trade policy is now shaped less by openness than by security, strategic rivalry, and domestic political pressures. This has led many to question whether the WTO still retains real relevance.

It does. In fact, the more fractured the world becomes, the more necessary the WTO is.

Historically, the multilateral trading system was crucial in reducing tariffs and other trade barriers. From the GATT to the WTO, successive negotiation rounds lowered duties, curbed arbitrary restrictions, and made global commerce more predictable. These rules did not eliminate disputes, but they made them more manageable and gave smaller developing countries a framework to trade without being wholly subject to power politics. This should not be underestimated.

The post-war expansion of trade rested on institutions, rules, and negotiated commitments, with the WTO at the centre. It created a system in which disputes were meant to be handled through law, consultation, and multilateral discipline rather than unilateral coercion.

The challenge in 2026 is different. The issue is no longer reducing barriers but managing the collision between economics and geopolitics. The United States and China are in growing strategic competition, Europe is reassessing its dependencies, and many countries are turning to industrial policy, subsidies, local-content rules, and export restrictions in the name of resilience, security or self-reliance. Wars and regional conflicts have exposed shipping routes, destabilised food systems and increased energy volatility. Uncertainty has become a structural feature of global trade.

This is precisely why the WTO remains important. The organisation cannot eliminate political conflict, but it can limit the extent to which conflict turns into uncontrolled economic fragmentation. Without it, the world would drift further towards retaliatory tariffs, competing blocs, and selective rules shaped by the strongest economies. That would be especially damaging for smaller countries, which lack the leverage to negotiate on equal terms with major powers. For them, multilateral rules are not a matter of idealism, but of survival.

But if the WTO is to remain relevant, it cannot continue as if nothing has changed. It must adapt to present realities.

Reform is the alternative

The first task is to restore confidence in dispute settlement. A rules-based system cannot function if its enforcement mechanism is paralysed. The Appellate Body crisis has weakened the WTO's ability to uphold its rules and eroded trust in the institution. Restoring a credible dispute-settlement process must therefore be a top priority at MC14.

The second task is to move beyond the illusion that every issue can be resolved through a grand consensus among all members. The WTO is too large, too diverse, and too politically divided for that. Insisting on universal agreement has too often produced paralysis. A more flexible approach is needed. Carefully designed plurilateral agreements on digital trade, investment facilitation, environmental goods, and supply-chain resilience may not satisfy everyone, but they are better than institutional drift. The WTO must remain inclusive, but inclusiveness cannot become an excuse for inaction.

The third task is political as much as institutional. Defenders of free trade can no longer rely on abstract claims that liberalisation automatically benefits all. In many societies, globalisation has come to be associated with job insecurity, regional decline, and unequal rewards. Some of these concerns are overstated, but many are real. If the WTO is to regain legitimacy, the broader trade system must show it can coexist with fairness, development, and social stability. That means greater attention to food security, development needs, and policy constraints facing poorer countries.

The fourth task is crisis management. Today's disruptions are often driven not only by tariffs but by abrupt policy reactions: export bans on food, restrictions on fertilisers, curbs on medical supplies, and sudden controls on strategic goods. The WTO should play a stronger role in promoting transparency, discouraging panic-driven restrictions, and creating mechanisms for consultation during emergencies. Its relevance lies not only in opening trade but also in preventing avoidable disruption.

None of this will be easy. The WTO reflects the divisions of its members and cannot stand above politics entirely. It has often seemed slow, weak, and out of step with current realities. But abandoning it would not make the world more stable or just. It would only leave global trade more exposed to unilateralism, coercion, and uncertainty. That is the core message ministers should recognise in Yaoundé. The choice is not between a perfect WTO and some better alternative waiting in the wings. No such alternative exists. The real choice is between a reformed WTO and a world in which trade is increasingly shaped by power, pressure, and distrust.

The world does not need fewer trade rules, but rules that are more credible, flexible, and responsive to current realities. That is the challenge before MC14. If the ministers fail, the consequences will extend beyond trade diplomacy to higher costs, weaker growth, deeper inequality, and a more unstable international order. For all its flaws, the WTO remains one of the few institutions capable of preventing the global economy from sliding further into disorder. In a fractured world, that is not a small role; it is an essential one.

(The writer is an assistant professor of Economics, Centre for Economic and Social Studies [CESS], Hyderabad)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Polish pretence and other sole stories

If the 'chalk trick' helped us sail through the inspection, it counted as a victory

RAMA KASHYAP

Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s was different from childhood today, especially for those of us in middle-class families who lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Unlike children now, with their dizzying array of footwear – school shoes, formal shoes and sneakers – our world was far simpler. We had just one kind: school shoes – a single pair of black leather and another of white canvas, then called 'PT shoes'. At home, the ubiquitous footwear was the rubber chappals, colloquially called *kenchi*, a stark contrast to the variety of slippers and flip-flops children wear today.

Our universe revolved around Bata. Year after year, we wore the same iconic design—black lace-ups for boys and buckled shoes for girls. The size changed, but through all our school years, the design remained constant, like the North Star. Slipping into a brand-new pair of shiny shoes, we felt on top of the world – though the sheen lasted barely a day.

Old or new, shoes had to shine. The daily polishing ritual—much disliked—had to be strictly adhered to. There were, of course, days when we skipped it or settled for a hurried swipe. That invited a reprimand. Morning assembly was the moment of reckoning. As teachers marched down the lines for inspection, many of us would sheepishly attempt the last-ditch 'spit-shine' – a quick dab of saliva and a vigorous rub against the back of a calf muscle to restore some semblance of shine.

Beyond the black leather were the PT shoes – white, unisex canvas pairs worn on Saturdays. They were a logistical nightmare, absolute magnets for grime. One lap around the dusty playground and they looked as if they had been through a coal mine. Cleaning and polishing these canvas shoes was messy, requiring liquid polish that took an eternity to dry. Early on, we learnt *jugaad* – a resourceful, flexible approach to problem-solving. When the PT shoes were not polished, we resorted to a quick fix: rubbing chalk over them. The whiteness didn't last, as chalk would wear off quickly and the shoes would soon look dirty again, but if the 'chalk trick' helped us sail through the dreaded assembly inspection, it counted as a victory.

A smile still appears as I recall those small joys of good old school days – the tricks we tried, the hacks we perfected, and the shared experiences that bound us together. This walk down memory lane, in my old school shoes, is a comforting reminder of simpler times. We didn't have much, but we had the ingenuity to turn chalk into a cleaning kit and a bit of spit into a shine. The shoes were humble, but the memories—and the camaraderie of our shared 'crimes'—remain polished to perfection.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump's Iran bluff risks global catastrophe

Trump's boasts of a military victory against Iran and his false claims that Iran is pleading for talks are pushing the world to the brink. Military and diplomatic sources agree that Trump's plan to join Israel in bullying Iran into submission is failing on all fronts. Despite losing its Supreme Leader and military leaders, Iran remains defiant and is demanding that Trump accepts its terms. The constant deployment of US army, navy and air force resources into threatening postures against Kharg Island serves no military purpose, as Iran is well-prepared to fight back with undisclosed resources. Even if the US were to gain control of Kharg and other oil sources, it would be a Pyrrhic victory for Trump, but a catastrophic economic and humanitarian disaster for the world.

T C Narayan, Bengaluru

Shun VIP culture

This is with reference to 'Want 4 IPL passes for each MLA' (Mar 27). The expectation of preferential treatment, especially for something as non-essential as access to sporting events, sends the wrong message to citizens who often struggle to secure tickets through regular channels. It risks reinforcing a perception of "VIP culture" that distances representatives from the very people they serve. Rather than seeking special privileges, our elected leaders would do well to focus on the pressing issues facing the state and uphold the trust reposed in them by voters.

Narendra Kumar S S, Bengaluru

Parking struggle

With reference to 'Towing fee: Rs 650 for bikes, Rs 1,000 for cars' (Mar 25), while towing away vehicles parked in unauthorised areas is a good measure to ensure a smooth flow of traffic and improved road safety, the government must also prioritise making necessary arrangements for vehicle parking. Imposing penalties alone will not deter people from parking in unauthorised spaces. Especially with the rise in traffic in Bengaluru and shops on almost all streets, parking lots must be provided for public convenience. Only a balanced approach to infrastructure and law enforcement can address this issue effectively.

Jagadish R, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Give Rahul Gandhi 'tuitions' on the economy.

Kangana Ranaut, BJP MP

I always pass on good advice. It is the only thing to do with it. It is never of any use to oneself.

Oscar Wilde

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Reimagining India's old age homes

Ageing demands dignity and engagement, with societal attitudes evolving alongside care infrastructure

PALASH BARUAH AND MADHURA CHOWDHURI

India stands at a quiet but significant turning point in how it understands ageing. For generations, the joint family system served as the backbone of elderly care, offering not just physical support but also emotional security and a sense of belonging. Today, however, that structure is steadily evolving. Urbanisation, migration, and changing aspirations have reshaped family life, often leaving older adults to navigate their later years with greater independence but also, at times, greater isolation.

This transition has not gone unnoticed. Recent policy initiatives signal a growing recognition that the well-being of senior citizens must be treated as a national priority.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing an umbrella scheme, namely Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana (AVYAY). Under AVYAY and its Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens, the government currently supports hundreds of facilities aimed at providing shelter, healthcare, and social engagement for elderly citizens. Complementing these efforts, the Union Budget 2026-27 announced a plan to train 1.5 lakh caregivers within a year through programmes aligned with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Such initiatives reflect a growing recognition that as India's elderly population expands, organised systems of caregiving and assisted living will become increasingly important.

Yet, policy alone cannot address the deeper social realities of ageing. Evidence increasingly shows that a significant proportion of elderly individuals now live either alone or only with their spouse. While such arrangements may offer autonomy, they can also lead to loneliness, reduced social interaction, and limited access to immediate care during emergencies. In this context, the question is how society must respond to ensure dignity and well-being in old age.

This is where old age homes and assisted living facilities enter the conversation, often reluctantly. In India, these institutions continue to carry a heavy social stigma, commonly associated with abandonment or familial failure. However, this perception deserves careful re-examination. When thoughtfully designed, such spaces can provide community, companionship, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Ageing is not merely a medical condition – it is a social experience. For many elderly individuals, the absence of daily interaction can be as challenging as any physical ailment. In contrast, well-run residential facilities create vibrant social environments with group activities, cultural events, and shared routines. Whether it is participating in yoga sessions, attending film screenings, or engaging in conversations with peers, these interactions play a crucial role in maintaining emotional and psychological well-being.

Moreover, structured living can significantly enhance the quality of life. Regular meals, assistance with daily tasks, and access to healthcare services provide a sense of stability that is often difficult to achieve when living alone. Such environments can also encourage continued engagement with society.

From shame to dignity

This perspective invites a broader rethinking of ageing itself. Rather than viewing the elderly as dependents, it is possible to see them as a social dividend – a reservoir of experience, knowledge, and wisdom. Interactions between older adults and younger generations, through community programmes or school visits, can strengthen social bonds, promote mutual understanding and turn ageing into a period of continued participation rather than withdrawal.

For this vision to take root, a dual transformation is required – both in infrastructure and in mindset. Institutional care must evolve beyond basic shelter to become holistic centres that integrate healthcare, recreation, and social engagement. At the same time, the care economy needs sustained investment in trained professionals, fair wages, and supportive working conditions.

Equally important is the need to shift public perception. Choosing to live in an aged care facility should not be seen as a sign of neglect, but as one of many legitimate ways to ensure comfort and companionship. Just as younger generations seek independence in their living arrangements, older individuals should also have the freedom to choose environments that best support their needs.

India's demographic journey makes this conversation urgent. As the population ages, the country must expand its understanding of social security to include not only financial support but also emotional and community-based care. Old age homes, when reimagined, can become an integral part of this framework – spaces where dignity is preserved, relationships are nurtured, and life continues with meaning.

Moving from shame to dignity is not just about redefining institutions; it is about redefining values. It requires acknowledging that the final years of life deserve the same care, respect, and fulfilment as every other stage. In doing so, India has the opportunity to transform ageing from a narrative of decline into one of continued connection and grace.

(Palash is a fellow, and Madhura is a consultant at the National Council of Applied Economic Research [NCAER], New Delhi)

The Russia-Ukraine war and the West Asia conflicts signal shifting battlefields—India must adapt

Their wars, our lessons

LT GEN HARINDER SINGH (RETD.)

No two wars are similar, and drawing comparisons can be facile. However, some inferences can be drawn from the Ukraine-Russia war and the Iran versus Israel-US conflict. In Ukraine, the war of manoeuvre has been reduced to a war of attrition. In Iran, while the initial air strikes were successful, they have not translated into a decisive victory. The war has expanded into other benign economies and geographies. The question then is how India should deduce the changes in warfare to recalibrate its military strategy and develop useful military capacity.

New contexts in warfare

In this age of disruptive warfare, war fighting is no longer about military metrics and technological superiority, but how superior tactics can compensate for lack of capacity; how disruptive methods can stall a stronger adversary; how no single military service can be decisive in battle; how innovation brings advantage on the battlefield; how resilience underpins military power; and how faulty assumptions can deny victory to a stronger adversary in war. Therefore, caution must be exercised when debates on warfare become overly technology-centric.

A few aspects stand out. First, there are limits to the use of airpower. While air strikes can cause significant damage, they cannot deliver military victory. In Ukraine, the use of airpower has been rather muted. In Iran, the US strikes were possible only due to the lack of any meaningful air defence. In the May 2025 conflict, the Indian Air Force was inhibited from effectively using its assets to constrain Pakistan. Clearly, air superiority, as a fundamental tenet of airpower, is under stress. Where air superiority is achieved, the ground forces gain the freedom for manoeuvre. When absent, the character of war changes dramatically.

Second, the defence of the airspace is not a reassuring concept. Flooding the skies with drones is the new tactic. Some estimates suggest that for every dollar spent on drones, at least ten times as much is spent to shoot them down. Making low-cost interceptors – based on laser and microwave technology, a re-usable capability – could be the next big thing.

Besides, radars have been foundational to air defence. Long-range, high-value radars have been the choice for long. But the drone war has spurred demand for shorter-range radars, as standard systems struggle to detect small, low-flying drones, pushing efforts to develop cheaper last-mile solutions.

Third, the importance of mechanised warfare is coming under intense debate. With unmanned aerial systems and munitions inhibiting the use of tanks and ICVs (Infantry Combat Vehicles), analysts are drawing divergent conclusions. In Ukraine, these platforms have rarely produced any breakthroughs. Would that make these platforms obsolete or dependent on a new set of operational conditions that could help exploit this force? Smaller modular units could be one way of rethinking this force. In India's context, the mechanised forces still matter to secure our contested borders or make quick gains on a static battlefield.

The basics don't change

A few aspects, however, never change. First, disruptive technologies can create a spectre of military success, but they cannot help win wars. They can cause intense death and destruction, but not destroy the will of a resilient adversary. Militaries need the real tools of war – tanks, guns, ships and aircraft – to provide the staying power and prevail in war. These platforms matter for India as its external security threats are rooted in a troubled history with China and Pakistan.

Second, wars can escalate in several unexpected ways. When the shooting match starts, all military planning for decisive strikes and escalation dominance or control fails. As strategic mistakes compound, the political leadership is left with no choice but to accept failure or escalate by adding newer dimensions to the war – the ground or naval forces. Then comes a stage when efforts to reinforce this stalemate spiral out of control, and the conflict expands. In Iran, the US has been clearly pushed into this trap.

Third, national resilience is the key to fighting a stronger adversary. A country is a resilient power if it can yield sufficient intrinsic capacities to meet the demands of its national security for indefinite periods of time. Resilience is both the will and the ability to resist pressure, protect the populace and infrastructure, and continue to fight. Preparing societies for protracted conflict and maintaining the credibility of national narratives and societal cohesion must be an integral part of the national security planning, not a secondary consideration. Both Ukraine and Iran have amply proved it.

Building a future force

What India can learn from these wars is important. What capabilities are useful and what is not is India's planning dilemma. This muddies the debate on its choice of future war-fighting platforms – traditional or asymmetric. Traditional platforms – tanks, guns and aircraft – help to defend the home country, while the asymmetric – cyber, space, electronic warfare, etc. – help disrupt an adversary's capacity. Finding the right balance is the puzzle that India's military planners need to resolve.

India's recent promulgation of the Defence Vision 2047 is a step in the right direction. The vision document aims at addressing the dissonance in its defence policies at three levels – in terms of aligning its technology, doctrine and structure – to build the future multi-domain force. While multi-domain operations look good in theory, they are difficult to resource and operationalise. More powerful nations, like the US and China, can indulge, but countries like India that lack the techno-industrial heft can find it difficult to field such a capability.

For India, focusing on creating the right operating layers – ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance), C2 (Command and Control), long-range precision strikes, close-contact battle, logistics, infrastructure, etc. – can help optimise the limited resources to build a useful deterrent. Understanding the new contexts in warfare can help decide what suits us – a multi-domain force that takes years to build and optimise, or a layered capability that is efficient, affordable and quick to field. The latter seems to be a prudent choice, especially in light of India's recurring military tensions with Pakistan and China.

As a case in point, Ukraine and Iran have done well to build precise, affordable layers to stalemate a superior adversary.

(The writer is a former corps commander of the Indian Army and also headed the Indian Military Academy)

THE TAKEAWAYS

Drones: Now central, not auxiliary

- Cheap UAVs have reshaped battlefield economics
- **Ukraine:** Low-cost drones are limiting the use of armour
- **West Asia:** Low-level drone attacks are overwhelming air defences

Lesson for India: • Scale indigenous drones (offensive + ISR) • Build layered counter-drone systems

Layered air defence must be layered
- Israel uses multi-tier shields to counter mass drone strikes
- The gaps in Ukraine's air defence coverage and density were exposed

Lesson for India:
- Integrate S-400 with Akash, QR-SAM
- Extend low-level cover to forward bases and installations

Electronic Warfare Dominance
GPS jamming, spoofing, and communication disruption are decisive

Lesson for India:
- Invest in Electronic Warfare units
- Build secure and resilient communications

Intelligence & Real-Time Targeting
Precision depends on fused, networked intelligence

Lesson for India:
- Integrate space, cyber, HUMINT, AI
- Cut sensor-to-shooter time

Logistics decides wars
- Russia suffered logistics constraints
- Ukraine sustained by supply chains

Lesson for India:
- Strengthen border and logistics infrastructure
- Prepare for prolonged conflict

Urban warfare
- Urban terrain drives high attrition
- Civilian presence complicates operations

Lesson for India: • Strengthen specialised units • Incorporate precision, non-kinetic tools

Information warfare
Narratives shape global opinion and diplomacy

Lesson for India:
- Enhance strategic communications capability
- Manage narratives in real time

Civil-military fusion
Ukraine and Israel leveraged civilians and reserves

Lesson for India:
- Strengthen civil-military fusion
- Proactively integrate the private sector in defence

Nuclear deterrence limits
Nuclear powers can still fight conventional wars

Lesson for India:
- Prepare for a wide spectrum of protracted conflicts

Tech-driven border security
Increasing use of drones, infiltration, and grey-zone tactics

Lesson for India:
- Strengthen smart fencing, AI surveillance
- Improve inter-agency coordination

Indigenous defence
External dependence is a vulnerability

Lesson for India:
- Ensure self-reliance in critical technologies

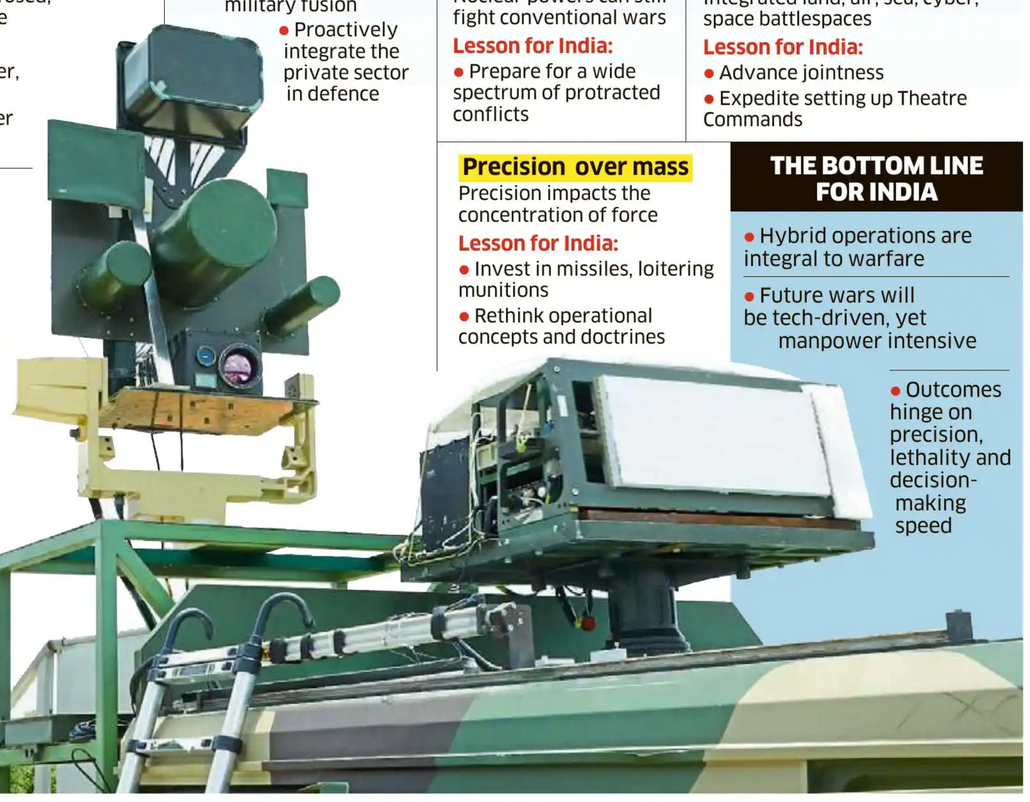
Multi-Domain Warfare
Integrated land, air, sea, cyber, space battlespaces

Lesson for India:
- Advance jointness
- Expedite setting up Theatre Commands

Precision over mass
Precision impacts the concentration of force

Lesson for India:
- Invest in missiles, loitering munitions
- Rethink operational concepts and doctrines

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR INDIA
- Hybrid operations are integral to warfare
- Future wars will be tech-driven, yet manpower intensive
- Outcomes hinge on precision, lethality and decision-making speed



SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Unravelling the history of wines

Genetic material preserved in ancient grape seeds reveals when, and how, humans meddled with wine grapes, writes Rebecca Dzombak

Humans have been drinking wine for thousands of years. Paintings from ancient Egypt show the harvesting of grapes and the making of wine. Mesopotamian murals illustrate elites raising a glass of what some scholars think is wine. And Roman frescos depict Dionysus luxuriating in the drink.

But how much has wine changed over the millennia? And what role did humans play in the evolution of grapes and their varieties?

Scientists are answering those questions using ancient DNA preserved in grape seeds found at archaeological sites. A new study presents an in-depth genetic analysis of ancient seeds, called pips, found in France, one of the world's cultural and geographic centres of the winemaking tradition.

Humans in France were domesticating grapes for making wine by 650 B.C., around the time when Greek settlers founded the port city of Marseilles, according to the study, published Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications. And the true date could be even earlier, the authors said.

The study also examined how grape varieties changed, or didn't, over centuries. Lineages like pinot noir and Folha de Figueira, a Portuguese white wine, remained essentially unchanged for hundreds of years, thanks to careful propagation efforts.

"It's mind-blowing to think that we humans have cultivated this same exact genetic clone of a plant for almost 1,000 years," said Jazmín Ramos Madrigal, who studies evolutionary genomics at the University of Copenhagen and was not involved in this research. It's a notable effort, especially when compared with other domesticated crops.

"The varieties we grow are only a few generations away from the initial domestication, which is very unlike what happens in other crops," said Michele Morgante, a geneticist at the University of Udine in Italy who was also not involved in the study. "Take current maize hybrids. They're thousands of generations away from where they started. Here, with wine, we're only five to 10 generations away."

The earliest domesticated grapes came from the mountainous region between the Black and Caspian seas. People were turning those grapes into wine at least 8,000 years ago, as evidenced by a wine jar of that age uncovered in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Over thousands of years, as civilisations and trade expanded, people transported domesticated grapes westward, where they mingled with local, wild varieties that didn't have much appeal on their own. Eventually, France and other European countries developed flourishing vineyards and wineries that sourced grapes from across Europe and the southwestern Middle East.

But researchers have more to learn about when grape varieties were first created, how they were cultivated and how grape diversity changed over time with human interference.

"When it comes to France, every single question is wide open," said Ludovic Orlando, a geneticist and evolutionary biologist at the University of Toulouse who led the new study. "There is a lot that's known from history and archaeology, but there are a lot of ideas to be tested in terms of genetic data."

Previous studies of grapes relied either on the size and shape of grape pips or on partial genomic analyses to reconstruct diversity and cultivation over time. There were also significant gaps in the record, particularly before the Iron Age and in the late Middle Ages, leaving the timing of domestication uncertain.

Orlando and his colleagues collected more than 150 preserved wild and domesticated grape pips from archaeological sites around France. He focused on France partly because of the cultural importance of wine there, and partly because of its relatively central location in Europe.

The earliest sample was from around 2250 B.C., during the Bronze Age, extending the record back by almost 1,000 years. The most recent was from around A.D. 1450, at the end of the Middle Ages, about 300 years later than previous studies had covered.

Of all the pips, 49 had enough well-preserved DNA that they could be analysed.

Orlando sequenced the pips' whole genomes and then compared them with one another. He was looking for similarities that could reveal when wild and domesticated grapes mixed, how and whether humans cultivated specific grape varieties and how varieties changed or remained the same over time.

The oldest samples, from the Bronze Age, were wild. Around 625 B.C., in the early Iron Age, domesticated varieties that would have been imported from the East and plants that appeared to be wild-domestic hybrids appeared in the genetic record. Wild plants continued to exist, but after that point, France's grape pips had a clear signal of cultivation.

"The biggest contribution of this paper is that it puts a more precise date on when the first fully domesticated varieties appear," Morgante said.

Besides the relatively unchanged pinot noir and the Folha de Figueira, a modern sauvignon blanc was a clone of a 900-year-old seed, according to a previous paper by Ramos Madrigal of the University of Copenhagen.

The longevity suggests intentional propagation by cuttings, which creates clone plants but doesn't build genetic diversity. That likely reflects efforts to develop grapes better adapted to Europe's warmer, wetter climate, as well as taste preferences.

"We like our wine," Ramos Madrigal said. "Once you find something you like, you want to keep it. You keep growing it. And it seems like ancient civilisations were good at that, and we have them to thank."

Having more completed grape genomes will allow researchers to identify traits that could help modern grapes survive in a changing climate, since most European grapes originated in hotter, drier regions.

The New York Times

DID YOU KNOW?

Humans poisoned arrows 60,000 years ago

Over 60,000 years ago, African hunters knew how to extract poison from a plant and lace their arrows with it for an efficient kill, says a new study that has unearthed the oldest evidence of human-made poisoned arrows.

The discovery challenges the existing theory on the use of poison arrows originating in Egypt around 4,000 years ago.

Researchers from South Africa and Sweden have found the oldest traces of arrow poison on 60,000-year-old quartz arrowheads found in Umhlatuzana rock shelter in KwaZulu-Natal. The killer chemicals come from the tropical bulbous-flowering plant gifbol (*Boophone disticha*), a poisonous species still used by traditional hunters in the region.

"This is the oldest direct evidence that humans used arrow poison. It shows that our ancestors in southern Africa not only invented the bow and arrow much earlier than previously thought, but also understood how to use nature's chemistry to increase hunting efficiency," says corresponding author Marlize Lombard from the Palaeo-Research Institute at the University of Johannesburg.

Chemical analyses revealed the presence of buphanidrine and epibuphanisine, two alkaloids found in the gifbol plant, long known among local hunters for its highly toxic properties.

Boophone disticha.

At Stockholm University, the researchers found traces of these plant toxins in five out of ten samples they analysed. The same alkaloids were also spotted on bone arrowheads collected by Swedish travellers in the region 250 years ago, indicating the poison's use over many millennia in southern Africa.

Finding these specific alkaloids on five out of the ten quartz arrow tips studied, argue scientists, cannot be coincidental because of the evidence that around 77,000 years ago people from the same area were aware of insecticidal and larvicidal properties of aromatic leaves, used for bedding.

The toxic chemicals in the bulb remain stable for a long time. They don't decompose easily, even in wet environments, and interact well with mineral surfaces like stone arrow tips. That's probably why they survived for 60,000 years at Umhlatuzana.

"By carefully studying the chemical structure of the substances, we were able to determine that these particular substances are stable enough to survive this long in the ground," says Sven Isaksson at Stockholm University. "It's also fascinating that people had such a deep and long-standing understanding of the use of plants."

"Using arrow poison requires planning, patience and an understanding of cause and effect. It is a clear sign of advanced thinking in early humans," says Anders Hogberg at the Department of Cultural Sciences, Linnaeus University.

The study has appeared in a recent issue of *Science Advances*.

-Kalyan Ray

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER AND LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER, SEDAM SUB-DIVISION, SEDAM

Telephone No.08441-276073 e-mail:acsedam@gmail.com

No.REV/LAQ/NH/01/2024-25 Dated : 17-03-2026

:: PUBLIC NOTICE ::

Under section 3G and subsection (3) and (4) of the NH act 1956

In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3D of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956), the Ministry Of Road Transport And Highways, Central Government vide India Gazette Notification No. SO. 4324 (E), Dated: 23.09.2025 published on dated:23.09.2025, declared the acquisition of land indicated the schedule here under for building (widening/four laning etc.,), maintenance, management andoperation of NH167N in the stretch of land from Km. 0.00 to Km. 15.85 (Near Miriyan Telangana/Karnataka Border-Chincholi Section) in the district of Kalaburagi (Gulbarga) in the state of KARNATAKA.

Under the provision of section 3G(1), (2), (3) and (4) of the NH act 1956 (48 of 1956), it is here by informed to the land owners and any interested persons whose lands will be acquired for building (widening/four laning etc.,), maintenance, management andoperation of NH167N in the stretch of land from Km. 0.00 to Km. 15.85 (Near Miriyan Telangana/Karnataka Border-Chincholi Section) in the district of Kalaburagi (Gulbarga) in the state of KARNATAKA to appear in person or by an agent of by a legal practioner and submit their claims for determining/awarding compensation, along with copies of the following relevant documents to the following office and to state the nature of their respective interest in such lands at below mentioned office and the date of receiving the application.

1) **Present year RTC, 2) 20 years EC, 3) Mutation copy, 4) Sale/partition/other deeds of title, 5) Tax paid receipts copy, 6) Family Tree, 7) Land Converssion order certified copy, 8) Panchayath Khatha copy and other relevant documents etc.,**

If the Land owners of land indicated in the schedule here under fails to submit the aforesaid documents within the stipulated time, in such case Land compensation will be determined based on the available documents in this office. Further it is informed that not to carry any Crop Growing or any Development activity now onwards in the respect of lands specified in the Schedule as per the said 3(D) notification vested in the Central Government, also if Crops any Grown or carried any Development activity will not be considered for Compensation.

Sl. No.	Name of the Taluk	Name of the Village	Date & Time	Place of receiving Application and Documents
1	Chincholi	Polakpalli, Chandapur Somlingadhalli, Kallur Road and Miriyan	08.04.2026 from 11:00AM to 01:00PM	Office of the Assistant Commissioner and Land Acquisition Officer, Sedam Sub-division, Sedam

Sd/- Assistant Commissioner and Land Acquisition Officer, Sedam Sub-division, Sedam

MINISTRYOFROADTRANSPORTANDHIGHWAYS NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 23rd , September, 2025

S.O. 4324(E).—Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, 1596(E) Dated:02/04/2025 , published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub- section (ii) issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intention to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening/four laning etc.,), maintenance, management andoperation of NH167N in the stretch of land from Km. 0.00 to Km. 15.85 (Near Miriyan Telangana/Karnataka Border-Chincholi Section) in the district of Kalaburagi (Gulbarga) in the state of KARNATAKA

And whereas the substance of the said notification has been published in "The Hindu" dated:06/05/2025 and "Vijaya Karnataka" dated:06.05.2025; under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas the competent authority has received Objections files under Section 3-C, Considered and settled the same appropriately.;

And whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the competent authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the competent authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling within the stretch of land from Km. 0.00 to Km. 15.85 (Near Miriyan Telangana/Karnataka Border-Chincholi Section) of NH167N in the state of KARNATAKA

State: Karnataka **District: Kalaburagi (Gulbarga)**

Sl. No.	Survey/ Plot Number	Type of Land	Nature of Land	Area (in Hectares)	Name of Land Owner/Interested Person
1	2	3	4	5	6
Taluk:Chincholi					
Village:Polakpalli					
1	114	Private	Dry	0.0522	Rasul Patel S/o Usman Patel, Jayaprakash S/o Chandrashetty, Hittala R/o Polakapalli, Gaus patel S/o Hussen Patel, Roda, Rehmatab W/o Miyya patel, Akram Patel S/o Jafar Patel, Irfanamiya S/o Khaza Patel, Ladle Patel S/o Khaza Patel, Gangamma W/o Annappa, Mr. M.C. Prem Kumar Rathod s/o Mohan Songa, Sri Katareddy Bommati s/o Mallareddy Bommati, Mahammed Salahuddin S/o Mahammed Zayauddin, Md. Ghulam Jilani S/o MA Razak 114/1, 114/2, 114/3
2	128	Common (Private/ Govt)	Dry	0.8246	Ramachandra S/o Lala singh, Government of Karnataka, Forest Department, Karnataka Reserved Forest 128/p1
3	63	Private	Dry	0.0588	Aheemad Ali S/o Mahemmad Ali, Ajmad Ali S/o Mahemmad Ali, Maksood Ali S/o Mahemmad
4	97	Private	Dry	0.0408	Vishvanath S/o Sharanappa, Shekhara S/o Sharanappa
Village: Somlingadhalli					
5	149	Private	Dry	0.3846	Khasim Sab S/o Nyamath Patel, Shamshuddin S/o Nyamath Patel, Mohammad Kareem S/o Nyamath Patel, Mohammad Ibrahim S/o Abdul Jabbar 149/2, 149/3
6	150	Private	Dry	0.1973	Jagdeeshchandra S/o Shivasharanappa, Anandkumar S/o Hayyalappa Kallur Road, Chandrashekhar S/o Hayyalappa Kallur Road
Village: Kallur Road					
7	1	Private	Dry	0.0314	Lakshminarayan Reddy S/o Ramalinga reddy
8	10	Private	Dry	0.1177	S. Shantabai W/o S Shivashankar, Roopa W/o Ramesh, Mr. Shree Revanasidda, President of Ambigara Chaudayya College of Education, Jayanagar, Gulbarga, Kalaburagi, Ravindra Varma S/o Shankrappa, Ramesh S/o Sharanappa 10/1,10/6,10/4,10/3,10/5,10/6
9	100	Private	Dry	0.0507	Umashankar S/o Chanbasappa, Lalita Bai W/o Shubhash Kalaskar Chincholi 100/1,100/2
10	101	Private	Dry	0.1115	Government Of Karnataka, Parvatamma w/o Channareddy, Mirza Atiq Ahamad S/o Mirza Usman Baig 101/1, 101/2, 101/3
11	102	Private	Dry	0.0304	Mirza Atiq Ahamad S/o Mirza Usman Baig
12	104	Private	Dry	0.3443	Venkata Ramareddy, J.Patila S/o Janardhanreddy Veerareddy, J. Patila S/o Janardhanreddy Partners of M/s Kamadhenu Stone Company, S Arunareddy S/o N Veerareddy, Chandramma W/o Suryakant Kantali R/o Kallurar road, Siddanna S/o Shivalingappa, Sanganna S/o Shivalingappa, Shivaraj S/o Shivalingappa Idlayi Suvarna W/o Veeranna 104/2,104/1B,104/1A2,104/1A1
13	11	Private	Dry	0.0203	Bakkappa S/o Sayappa Kunchavaram R/o Kallur Road
14	118	Gover-nment	Dry	0.0112	Government
15	12	Gover-nment	Dry	0.0506	Government
16	126	Private	Dry	0.1175	Siddanna S/o Shivalingappa, Raghavendra S/o Shankar Raj 126/1
17	127	Private	Dry	0.0033	Savitri S/o Shivukant Jonnal Saraswati S/o Shivukanta Jonnal Purushottam Reddy S/o Bhimareddy Chittapa Shantkumar S/o Bakkappa Palled Syed Sabir Hussaini S/o Syed Saheb Jani Saheb Asma Begum W/o Naseer Hussain. Abdul Qadeer S/o Khaza Saba Junaidi Padmamma W/o Mareppa 127/2
18	128	Private	Dry	0.1288	Ramareddy Seri S/o Channareddy
19	130	Private	Dry	0.463	Sudarshanreddy S/o Channareddy, Chandrakanth S/o Gangadhar, Rasnam Kavitha W/o Rasnam Purashotamreddy, Gumudal Swapna W/o Gumudal Sudhakar 130/1,130/2,130/3,130/4
20	131	Private	Dry	0.1113	Chandrashekhar S/o Krishnayya R/o Gorampalli
21	132	Private	Dry	0.1053	Executive Managing Engineer, (Electrical) Executive Division- II GESCOM Gulaburga (Subhash Chandra) Gulaburga 132/1
22	133	Gover-nment	Dry	0.203	Government Paramboke
23	135	Private	Dry	0.0214	Tippanna S/o Babanna Harijan
24	15	Private	Dry	0.0894	Veerabhadrappa S/o Sharanappa 15/1, 15/2
25	18	Private	Dry	0.2226	Laxmidevi W/o Laxman, Chandrashekhar S/o Laxman 18/2
26	21	Private	Dry	0.3138	Shekhar Babu Ponu S/o Palani Mudali Ponuri Behalf of General Manager Chettinad Cement Corporation Private Limited(NA) 21/1,21/2
27	22	Private	Dry	0.0557	S.Hariharan, Secretary,Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No.603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
28	227	Private	Dry	0.0041	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No.603 Anna Road Channai (NA), 227/1
29	231	Private	Dry	0.2697	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation RegisteredOfficeNo.603Anna Road Channai (NA)
30	233	Private	Dry	0.4402	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No.603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
31	234	Private	Dry	0.172	S.Hariharan, Secretary,Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No.603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
32	235	Private	Dry	0.0557	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered OfficeNo. 603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
33	236	Private	Dry	0.0203	S.Hariharan, Secretary ,Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No. 603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
34	237	Private	Dry	0.0506	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No. 603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
35	238	Private	Dry	0.0152	Shankramma W/o Papayya, S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No. 603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
36	24	Private	Dry	0.0911	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No. 603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
37	25	Private	Dry	0.0203	Narasingh S/o Narayan
38	253	Private	Dry	0.0102	Ramappa S/o Tippanna
39	26	Private	Dry	0.0051	S.Hariharan, Secretary, Chennai Behalf of Company M/S Chattinad Cement Corporation Registered Office No. 603 Anna Road Channai (NA)
40	5	Private	Dry	0.047	Mohammad Ilyas S/o M Yusuf 5/1
41	8	Private	Dry	0.0367	Ramanna S/o Devappa Hasaragundagi, Kamalamma W/o Veeranna, Smt. Pushpavati W/o Kashinath
42	9	Private	Dry	0.0304	Ramesh S/o Sharanappa
43	99	Private	Dry	0.0305	N. Sureshgowda S/o N Venkataramulu gowda, N Nareshgowda S/o N Venkataramulu, Sharanappa S/o Veerappa Parvati W/o Lt. Pandari gottur, Naga Sureshgowda S/o Naga Venkata Ramlu, 99/1,99/3,99/10
44	Grama-thana	Common (Private/ Govt)	Dry	0.0101	Gramathana
Village:Miryan					
45	243	Private	Dry	0.042	Narasimhareddy S/o Venkatareddi, Shreenivasareddi S/o Narasimhareddi 243/1, 243/2
46	244	Private	Dry	0.153	Narasimhareddi S/o Venkatareddi, Mohemmad Ibrahim S/o Lal Mohemmad Bagaban
47	249	Private	Dry	0.0085	Anjayya S/o Narasimhalu Kalala R/o Miryana, Anjayya S/o Narasimhalu, Lakshmi W/o Nagayya, Suvarna W/o Narayana 249/1
48	262	Private	Dry	0.7083	Jyshree W/o Ramkrishna, C Suadhakar S/o Nagappa, Srinivas Rao S/o Donderao R/o Miriyan, K Vijay Bharthi W/o Srinivasrao, Madusudhan S/o Nagappa, Sudindra Joshi S/o Srinivas chaari, Jayshree W/o Jagdeesh Patil,Suresh S/o Vemkatramulu
49	274	Private	Wet	0.007	Abdul Rauf S/o Abdul Nabi sab
50	292	Private	Dry	0.0067	Panchaksharayya S/o Basavannayya, Bichhayya S/o Ramayya, Tulajayya S/o Ramayya, N. Anjamma W/o Narayana 292/1, 292/2, 292/3
51	64	Gover-nment	Dry	0.0456	Parampoke
Village:Chandhapura					
52	32	Private	Dry	1.5379	Subadrabai W/o Veerayya 32/2
53	44	Private	Dry	0.7286	Renukabai W/o Govind, Bikkubai W/o Meghu, Vimaladevi W/o Bhimrao Makashi, Shivarajamma W/o Kailas Kalaburagi R/o Chandapur 44/1,44/2
54	45	Private	Dry	0.8094	Suryaprakash S/o Manikrao 45/1
55	47	Common (Private/ Gover-nment)	Dry	1.1332	SureshS/oGundappa 47/1
56	50	Private	Dry	0.9714	Chandrashekhar S/o Nagappa Chengati, Yankappa S/o Vakeerappa, Veeresh S/o Chandrashekhar, Palankerthe Ratnamma W/o Chandrashekhar 50/1, 50/2, 50/3
			Total	**11.6223**	

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1215/KSMC&A/2025-26

[F.No.RW/BNG/NH-167N/Km.0.00to15.850/3D]

Sd/- Director

ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜನೀಯರವರ ಕಚೇರಿ, (ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ)

ಧಾರವಾಡ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಧಾರವಾಡ

ಕ್ರಸಂ : ಕಾನಿಇಂಧಾ/ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ/ಪಿ.ಪಿ.1,2,3,4,5/2025–26/ 7445 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27–03–2026

I.F.T – KW –1, 2, 3 & 4

ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರಮೆಂಟ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ)

ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರರು, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಧಾರವಾಡರವರು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಪರವಾಗಿ ಕೆ.ಟಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ 2000 ರನ್ವಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ ಕೆಡಬ್ಲ್ಯೂ–1,2,3,4 ರ ನಿಯಮದಂತೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. **(kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಣಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ **ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ರೂ. 1.12 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ರೂ.830.00 ಲೆಕ್ಕಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ:–2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳ ಮೂಲಸೌಕರ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಯೋಜನೆ, 2025–26 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ 3054–04–337–1–10–200 ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮುಖ್ಯ ರಸ್ತೆ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳು, 4059–80–051–0–60–422 ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿ ಮೂಲಸೌಕರ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ–ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ ಉಪಯೋಜನೆ, 3054–03–337–0–05–200 ರಾಜ್ಯ ಹೆದ್ದಾರಿ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ, 2216–07–053–0–01–200** ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ವಸತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಂಗ ವಸತಿ ಗೃಹಗಳ ದುರಸ್ತಿ/ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ, 2059–80–053–4–00–200 ವಿವಿಧ ಇಲಾಖಾ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳ ದುರಸ್ತಿ/ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ, 4059–80–051–0–29–386 ಇಲಾಖಾ ಕಟ್ಟಡಗಳು ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ, 5054–80–190–0–01–132 ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಸ್ತೆ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ – ಬಂಡವಾಳ ವೆಚ್ಚ & 3054–03–102–0–01–200 ರಾಜ್ಯ ಹೆದ್ದಾರಿ ಸೇತುವೆ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ.

ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ: (1) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT31546/Call-2, (2) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34272, (3) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT 31525, (4) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT31530 (5) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT30736/CALL-2 (6) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34799 (7) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33873, (8) PWD/2025-26/SE1155, (9) PWD/2025-26/SE1154, (10) PWD/2025-26/SE1169, (11) PWD/2025-26/SE1170, (12) PWD/2025-26/SE1171, (13) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34580, (14), PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35102, (15) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35103, (16) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT 35090 (17) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35092 (18) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35093, (19) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35095, (20) PWD/2025-26/SE0603/CALL-3 (21) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35121, 22) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35202, (23) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT31561 (24) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34915 (25) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34948 (26) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34126 (27) PWD/2024-25/SE0244, (28) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34990, (29) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34896, (30) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34918 (31) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34943, (32) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34302 (33) PWD/2024-25/BD/WORK_INDENT16551/Call-4, (34) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT27630/Call-4, (35) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT 30906/CALL-3, (36) PWD/2025-26/SE1049/CALL-2, (37) PWD/2025-26/BR/WORK_INDENT29702

ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ : (1) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34950, (2) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35120 (3) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35126, (4) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34834, (5) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34303,

ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಪಂಗಡ : (1) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT35026, (2) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT35105

ಪ್ರವರ್ಗ–2ಎ : (1) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33867/CALL-2 (2) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34305, (3) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT 34382, (4) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34951 (5) PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT35104

1) Calander of Events : (1) ಪ್ರಿಬಿಡ್ / ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **06.04.2026** ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ **12:30** ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (2) ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಪತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **07.04.2026** ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ **04:00** ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (3) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **08.04.2026** ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ **04:30** ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ (4) ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **09.04.2026** ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ **04:30** ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂದಿಸಿದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಅಂತರ್‌ಜಾಲ ವಿಳಾಸ **http://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**ದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ ಧಾರವಾಡ ವಿಭಾಗ ಕಚೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಕಚೇರಿಯ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರರು,
ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ,
ಧಾರವಾಡ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಧಾರವಾಡ.

ವಾ.ಸಾ.ಇ/ಧಾರವಾಡ/1398/ದೇಶಪಾಂಡೆಪಬ್ಲಿಸಿಟಿ/2025–26

MYSORE MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE, MYSORE

(Government of Karnataka- Autonomous Institute)
Irwin Road, Mysore-570001, Telephone No:- +91-0821-2520512 (Off),2520803 (Fax),
Email- mmcrimysore@yahoo.com, website: www.mmcri.karnataka.gov.in

No.MMC&RI/Tender/06/2025-26 Date:27.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sub: Invitation of Tender for Purchase of Surgical Gloves & maintenance of In/Outpatient registration, A.B.A.R.K & other free treatment of Government programs at Associated Hospitals of Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Mysuru.

The Tender has been invited as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements Act 1999 in Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Mysuru. The Tender document has been download from E-procurement website: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Tenders which are not submitted with E.M.D will be rejected.

Sl No	Tender / Short term Re-Tender	Commence date of tender submission	Last date of tender submission	Tender Amount (Rs.Lakh)
1	Sup/Viva/100/2025-26 Purchase of Surgical Gloves	27.03.2026	27.04.2026	199.00
2	Sup/Viva/102/2025-26 Maintenance of In / Outpatient registration, A.B.A.R.K & other free treatment of Government Programs	27.03.2026	27.04.2026	325.00

If, the last date for submission of Tender treated as holiday, the next working day will be considered as last date. No Notification in this regard will be announced.

Sd/- Director and Dean
Mysore Medical College & Research Institute, Mysore

DIPR/MYSORE/Shirdi Sai/1898/2025-26

GREATER BENGALURU AUTHORITY

Office of Chief Health Officer (Public Health), GBA Head Office, Ground Floor,Annex-2, N R Sqaure, Bengaluru-560002

No GBA/2025-26/SE0024 **Date: 27/03/2026**

Tender Notification

Greater Bengaluru Authority invites Short term tender from eligible bidders for the following:

1) Tender for the supply of Data Entry Operators on outsource basis. Following is the Events of Bid process:

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) SCHEDULE

1.	Tender Reference No. : **GBA/2025-26/SE0024**
2.	Date of Commencement of Download of RFP Document from Karnataka public Procurement portal website **http://Kppp.karnataka.gov.in : From 27/03/2026 onwards**
3.	Last Date and Time for uploading Online Queries in Karnataka public Procurement portal: **02/04/2026 up to 5:00 pm**
4.	Date and Time of Pre-bid Meeting : **02.04.2026 at 12:30 AM** at the following venue: Office of CHO, Ground Floor, Annexe-3 Building, N R square, Bengaluru-560002. .
5.	Last Date and Time for uploading of RFP Application in Karnataka public Procurement portal **: up to 08/04/26 5:00 PM**
6.	Date and Time of Online Opening of RFP Applications in Karnataka Public Procurement portal: **09/04/26 5:10 PM**
7.	Place of Opening of RFP Applications : Online at Karnataka Public Procurement portal
8.	Address for Communication : Chief Health Officer (Public Health), Office of the CHO, Ground Floor, Annexe-2 Building, N R square, Bengaluru-560002. Email:choph515@gmail.com Phone: 9845208571

Only Online Queries through KPP portal will be accepted. Queries sent through letters, emails or any other mode will not be entertained.

Sd/- Chief Health Officer (Public Health), GBA.

WEST ASIA JOLT: Priority to industries that rely on LPG for heating and cannot switch to natural gas

Commercial LPG supply up to 70% of pre-conflict demand

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

FUEL STATUS

- India has enough petrol, diesel, and LPG stocks to last at least 2 months with normal delivery cycles, says govt
- Panic-buying and long queues at petrol pumps and LPG distributors in parts have been triggered by misinformation and rumours, says official

The Central government on Friday increased commercial LPG allocations to states by 20%, raising the quota to 70% of the demand before the West Asia conflict to meet industrial requirements, including steel and automobiles.

In a letter to states' chief secretaries, Oil Secretary Neeraj Mittal directed that the additional supply be prioritised for labour-intensive industries such as steel, automobiles, textiles, dyes, chemicals, and plastics, which support other essential sectors.

"In addition to the existing 50% allocation, an additional 20% is now proposed, which would bring the total commercial LPG allocation to 70% of the pre-crisis level of the packed non-domestic LPG," he wrote.

According to the letter, priority would be given to industries that rely on LPG for heating and cannot switch to natural gas.

The government reiterated that the country had enough petrol, diesel, and LPG stocks to last at least two months with normal delivery cycles.

Panic-buying and long queues at petrol pumps and LPG distributors in parts have been triggered by misinformation and rumours, said Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma.

"There is no crisis or shortage," she said. "We have a sufficient amount of crude oil (raw material to make fuels like petrol and diesel). Our stocks of petrol and diesel are sufficient, and LPG supplies have been ensured."

All petrol pumps across the country are adequately stocked and operating normally, with no rationing of petrol or diesel.

She advised citizens to avoid panic purchases and rely on official information, while encouraging the use of alternative fuels such as piped natural gas and electric cooking solutions.

People wait in a queue with empty cylinders to avail refilled ones in Noida on Friday. PTI

No proposal of imposing lockdown: FM

NEW DELHI, PTI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said there is no proposal to impose a lockdown in the country in the wake of the war in West Asia, and asked politicians to refrain from rumour-mongering and creating fear psychosis among the people.

The minister also said the government will remain on its "toes" to keep the fiscal deficit under check while ensuring the burden of rising global crude oil prices does not fall on the common man.

Nirmala Sitharaman

Replying to a discussion on the Finance Bill, 2026, in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said that while several countries have increased motor fuel prices by 20-50%, India has kept petrol and diesel rates unchanged.

"I think we will be following the same pattern (fiscal prudence as in past). We will be able to keep the government fiscal stance carefully managed. Also, there will be efforts to have greater mobilisations through non-tax revenues...We shall be on our toes," Sitharaman said.

Later, the Rajya Sabha returned the Finance Bill to the Lok Sabha by voice vote, thus completing the budgetary exercise for the next fiscal year, starting April 1.

Excise duty on petrol, diesel cut by Rs 10/litre

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Central government has said it has slashed the special excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre to shield consumers as a spike in crude oil price amid the ongoing West Asia conflict widens oil-marketing companies' (OMCs) losses.

As per a notification issued by the Union Finance Ministry dated March 26, the special additional excise duty on one litre of petrol was reduced from Rs 13 to Rs 3 and for diesel to zero from Rs 10 per litre, with immediate effect.

The overall excise duty on petrol has now come down from Rs 21.9 to Rs 11.9 per litre and on diesel from Rs 17.8 to Rs 7.8 per litre.

Despite the sharp reduction in taxes, retail prices of petrol and diesel will remain unchanged, the government clarified, adding that the tax relief was meant to cushion the OMCs' losses.

The central government has also introduced a new levy on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to disincentivise exports.

Diesel will now attract an export duty of Rs 21.5 per litre, while aviation turbine fuel (ATF) will attract a levy of Rs 29.5 per litre.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Vivek Chaturvedi said the excise duty as well as the export taxes would be reviewed every fortnight.

He said the lower excise duty would result in a revenue loss of around Rs 7,000 crore to the Central government in 15 days.

"The situation is dynamic. We are living in difficult times," he told reporters.

The decision comes amid a surge in crude oil prices due to the West Asia conflict. In the past one month, crude oil prices have surged by around 75% to over $120 a barrel from nearly $70 a barrel before the start of the US-Israel-Iran conflict on February 28.

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri noted that OMCs were losing Rs 24 per litre on petrol and Rs 30 per litre on diesel.

Inter-ministerial group to address fuel-related issues

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Central government has formed an inter-ministerial group headed by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to address the West Asia crisis.

Government sources said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri were among its members, besides other ministers.

Sources said the group will coordinate across ministries, amid the looming gas shortage owing to the crisis.

"The group has senior members of the Cabinet; they will provide solutions and directions on any issue arising out of the crisis with different ministries as well as state governments," added the sources.

With long queues outside of LPG centres and petrol stations, the high-level group's focus is expected to be to stop any kind of panic about LPG shortage and the rising price of petrol and diesel.

India has adequate fertiliser reserves: Nadda in LS

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister J P Nadda on Friday informed Lok Sabha that India has adequate reserves to provide fertilisers to farmers for the upcoming Kharif season (June to September) and there is no need to panic.

Union Minister J P Nadda in the Lok Sabha on Friday. PTI

The government is taking measures to ensure availability amid the ongoing West Asia war, Nadda said, adding that he spoke to state agriculture ministers on Thursday and informed them about the availability of fertilisers.

The members expressed concern over the fertiliser stock due to the impact of the West Asia war on shipping lines and the supply of raw material.

Nadda said "the government is looking for diversification, new markets, newer areas, from where we will get raw materials also for fertilisers. We have framed up our strategy to ensure fertiliser availability."

In a related issue, Minister of State for Fertilisers Anupriya Patel said in her written reply to the Lok Sabha that India produced 24.23 lakh tonnes of fertiliser, including urea and DAP, in the first three weeks of March, notwithstanding the gas supply crunch amid the West Asia crisis. Of which, urea production was 13.55 lakh tonnes, while Di ammonium Phosphate (DAP)/NPK and Single Super Phosphate (SSP) were at 7.62 lakh tonnes and 3.06 lakh tonnes, respectively, during March 1-24.

Highlighting the steps taken to ensure smooth gas supply to fertiliser units, she said the government has notified fertiliser as a priority sector, ensuring at least 70% gas supply. As of March 23, urea stock was 53.08 lakh tonnes, DAP 21.80 lakh tonnes and NPKs 48.38 lakh tonnes.

Petrol, diesel price cut because of polls: Cong

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Congress on Friday claimed that the cut on "special additional excise duty" on petrol and diesel was due to the upcoming Assembly elections in several states.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said consumer prices were not reduced when global crude oil prices fell on seven different occasions in the past 12 years. "Today's announcement was because of assembly elections. Wait till April 30th [sic]," he posted on X.

The party's media and publicity department chairman Pawan Khera said, "If you saw the headlines about petrol and diesel prices 'coming down' and thought the government had offered relief to you, you'd be mistaken. As of now, prices remain the same for dealers and for consumers."

He added: "What has actually been reduced is the 'special additional excise duty', a levy paid by oil-marketing companies to the government."

Govt reintroduces windfall taxes on fuel exports

Shares of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) slumped 4.55% on Friday, wiping out nearly Rs 80,000 crore in the market capitalisation of the Mukesh Ambani-led company, as the government reintroduced windfall taxes on fuel exports amid a surge in global prices, DHNS reports from New Delhi.

A levy of Rs 21.5 per litre on the export of diesel and Rs 29.5 per litre on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) will apply, according to a Finance Ministry notification.

MoD clears military buys worth Rs 2.38 lakh crore

Five more S-400 units and 60 transport aircraft to be procured

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

DEFENCE PUSH

- Army to get 300 additional Dhanush guns, tracked air defence systems
- Fourth S-400 due by mid-2026; final by year-end
- IAF to procure remotely piloted strike aircraft, overhaul Su-30 engines
- Coast Guard to get heavy-duty air cushion vehicles

A year after Operation Sindoor, in which they played a key role in securing air bases, the Defence Ministry on Friday approved the purchase of five additional S-400 air defence systems from Russia to protect more IAF bases, and 60 medium transport aircraft to replace the ageing AN-32 fleet.

Both are among a large number of 'Acceptance of Necessity' proposals — the first step in India's military purchase process — worth Rs 2.38 lakh crore, green-lighted by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The DAC also cleared the army's proposals to buy 300 Dhanush guns and additional air defence tracked systems.

The approval for five additional S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile systems comes at a time when India, according to sources, is set to receive the last two S-400 systems contracted in 2018 under a $5.43 billion deal.

Aiming to replace the AN-32 transport aircraft fleet, the DAC approved a proposal to buy 60 transport aircraft. The plan is to buy 12 in a fly-away condition, while the rest will be manufactured in India.

"For the Indian Air Force, proposals were cleared for the procurement of medium transport aircraft (MTA), S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile system, remotely piloted strike aircraft and overhaul of Su-30 aero engine aggregates," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

While the S-400 system will counter long-range enemy weapons targeting vital areas, the remotely piloted strike aircraft will launch counter-offensive air operations. They will also carry out intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

For the army, the approval was accorded for 300 Dhanush gun systems, more air defence tracked systems that are part of armoured columns, armoured piercing tank ammunition, high-capacity radio relay and runway-independent aerial surveillance system.

For the Indian Coast Guard, approval was granted for heavy-duty air cushion vehicles. Meanwhile, the ministry signed two separate agreements with US and Russian companies to purchase critical military hardware.

1,068 ha of rly land encroached: Minister

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw stated on Friday that around 1,068 hectares of land owned by Indian Railways is under encroachment across the country, which accounts for only 0.21% of the total 4.99 lakh hectares of railway land.

Replying to supplementary queries during Question Hour, the minister said that if one sees the utilisation of all railway land, nearly 80% of the land is near the tracks, 5% around it, while the remaining 15% of land is used for the development of stations, colonies, hospitals, and other things.

Ashwini Vaishnaw

"Around 0.21% of the railway land is under illegal encroachment in the country," he said.

Admitting that illegal encroachment is a serious issue, Vaishnaw said the railways has been taking action to evict encroachers. However, a humanitarian approach is adopted in such cases, as many of the poorest people have set up jhuggis on railway land. Wherever possible, practical solutions are worked out in coordination with state governments, he said.

The railways has fully digitised its land records, which are now available on a dedicated portal. Surveys have also been conducted using drones and satellite imagery for all railway land parcels. Besides, the railways keep monitoring to prevent any fresh encroachments of its land. As a result, fresh encroachments have been significantly reduced and almost stopped. "Most of the existing encroachments have been in place for many decades," the minister noted.

IRCTC summons Amul after worms in curd on Vande Bharat

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has summoned dairy brand Amul after live worms were allegedly found in its packaged curd served on the Patna-Tatanagar Vande Bharat Express.

The corporation's action follows a reprimand from the railway ministry, which not only imposed heavy fines on both IRCTC and the service provider, Krishna Enterprises, but also directed termination of the contract.

On March 15, a group of seven passengers on the Vande Bharat train found live worms and insects in one of the Amul packaged curd containers.

The IRCTC imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on the vendor, Krishna Enterprises, for negligence in food handling. Dissatisfied with the IRCTC's action, the railway ministry on March 25 directed it to terminate the contract and enhance the fine from Rs 25,000 to Rs 50 lakh. The ministry also imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on the IRCTC.

New DGCA norms for aircraft flying VIPs, VVIPs

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, PTI: Aviation regulator DGCA on Friday issued guidelines for aircraft operators flying VIPs and VVIPs, including chief ministers and governors, and emphasised that the crew should not be subjected to any undue pressure for operating a flight that might impact safety.

The guidelines, applicable for non-scheduled aircraft and helicopter operators carrying VVIPs, also come against the backdrop of the fatal plane crash in January that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others.

The DGCA said the aircraft operator should ensure that operations are in accordance with the Aircraft Rules and instructions issued from time to time and the flight crew is not subjected to undue pressure for undertaking a flight which may impact safety.

"Any last-minute changes to the flight due to VIP requirements should be coordinated through the organisation's management, and not directly with the crew."

With respect to election flying, each operator should nominate a responsible person, who would be accountable for ensuring compliance with all instructions.

GULBARGA ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
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Register Office, GESCOM, Main Road, Kalaburagi-585102. Website: gescom.in
CIN: U4010KA2002SGC030436

No: SEE/O&M/EEE(O)/AEE(O)/KPL/TF-68/2025-26/7576 **Date:26.03.2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(E-Procurement Mode Only)

1. Link line work:

Indent No: 1.GESCOM/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT291 Dtd:20.03.2026

The Superintending Engineer Ele., O&M Circle GESCOM, Koppal invites following link line tender on partial turnkey basis in e-procurement mode only. (Poles and conductor will be supplied by GESCOM).

1. **Name of O&M Division:** Gangavathi **Name of the Taluk:** Kanakagiri **Name of the Work**: Estimate for bifurcation of F4 Hulihydera IP feeder load to new feeder by providing 11KV link line from existing F4 Hulihydera feeder emanating from 110KV/11KV MUSS Kanakagiri in O&M Kanakagiri section of O&M sub division Gangavathi, under Partial Turn Key basis (Poles & Conductor will be supplied by the GESCOM) **Amount put to Tender per Link line work:** 14.95 **Rs. in lakhs. Per Work EMD Amount in Rs.:** 18695.00

2. Security Guards:

1. **Name of O&M Division:** Koppal **Name of The Work:** 1 Providing Services to GESCOM Offices for Security Guards for day to day office work in the jurisdiction of Koppal O&M Division Office, O&M Sub-divisions of Koppal/Yelburga/Munirabad and Kukanoor in O&M Circle, GESCOM, Koppal through contract agencies Indent No: GESCOM/2025-26/SE0382 **No of Security Guards:** 15 **Amount put to Tender per sub-station Rs. in lakhs.:** 40.42 **Per sub-station EMD Amount in Rs.:** 40425.00

2 **Name of O&M Division:** Gangavathi **Name of The Work:** Providing Services to GESCOM Offices for Security Guards for day to day office work in the jurisdiction of Gangavathi O&M Division Office, O&M Sub-divisions of Gangavathi/Kushtagi/Karatagi and O&M Section of Hanumasagara in O&M Circle, GESCOM, Koppal through contract agencies Indent No: GESCOM/2025-26/SE0386 **No of Security Guards:** 18 **Amount put to Tender per sub-station Rs. in lakhs.:** 49.14 **Per sub-station EMD Amount in Rs.:** 49150.00

3. Manpower:

1. **LOT No:** 1 LOT-1 **Name of The Work:** Providing the services of Data entry operators, Office Boys, sweepers, Store helpers for day to day office work at Offices of Koppal O&M Division, C&M Division Koppal, Koppal, Yelburga Kukanoor and Munirabad O&M Sub Divisions and Koppal Vigilance office through contract Agencies. Indent No: GESCOM/2025-26/SE0383 **No of Manpower (Data Entry Operators, Office Boys, Sweepers and Store Helpers):** 28 **Amount put to Tender per sub-station Rs. in lakhs.:** 82.34 **Per sub-station EMD Amount in Rs.:** 82345.00

2. LOT No: LOT-2 **Name of The Work:** Providing the services of Data entry operators, Office Boys, Sweepers, Store helpers for day to day office work at Offices of Gangavathi Division through contract Agencies. Indent No: GESCOM/2025-26/SE0384 **No of Manpower (Data Entry Operators, Office Boys, Sweepers and Store Helpers):** 13 **Amount put to Tender per sub-station Rs. in lakhs.:** 38.17 **Per sub-station EMD Amount in Rs.:** 38180.00

3. **LOT No:** LOT-3 **Name of The Work:** Providing the services of Data entry operators, Office Boys, Sweepers, Store helpers for day to day office work at Circle Office Koppal and RT sub-division Koppal through contract Agencies. Indent No: GESCOM/2025-26/SE0385 **No of Manpower (Data Entry Operators, Office Boys, Sweepers and Store Helpers):** 09 **Amount put to Tender per sub-station Rs. in lakhs.:** 26.37 **Per sub-station EMD Amount in Rs.:** 26375.00

For more details log on the website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after date: **31.03.2026** Last date of submission of bid is **15.04.2026** at 05:00PM.

For any clarification and details please contact office of the undersigned during officer hours Ph: 08539-200023 or 9483043703 &9483043701on all working days. E-Procurement Help-Desk Contact No:080-22371090/080-22340948.

Sd/-Superintending Engineer (Ele)
O&M Circle, GESCOM Koppal.

DIPR/Koppal/776/KSMCA/2025-26

Govt releases new TV Ratings Policy

NEW DELHI, PTI: The government on Friday released the TV Ratings Policy 2026, which sets out comprehensive guidelines for regulating television ratings in the country, to ensure transparency, independence and accountability in audience measurement.

It defines clear standards for the registration, operation, audit and oversight of agencies providing TV rating services.

It replaces the existing guidelines for TV rating agencies in India issued on January 16, 2014.

TMC questions delay in taking up notices to impeach CEC

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Friday questioned the delay in the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha chairman deciding on the Opposition-sponsored impeachment notice against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

The Opposition on March 12 submitted separate notices in both Houses of Parliament seeking Kumar's removal over his "partisan and discriminatory" conduct, "mass disenfranchisement" through the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and actions that "undermine public confidence".

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan have to examine the notices and decide whether to accept them. If they are accepted, the Speaker and the Chairman will set up a three-member panel to investigate the charges and submit a report.

"The ruling BJP is making a mockery of Parliamentary democracy. We need to know whether our notices are accepted. Is there a tacit understanding between the BJP-led government and the EC? It is not tacit, but a blatant understanding," said TMC Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O'Brien on Friday.

Live-in relation with married man not a crime, says HC

LUCKNOW, DHNS: The Allahabad High Court said that a consensual live-in relationship between a married man and another adult is not an offence.

A division bench comprising Justice JJ Munir and Justice Tarun Saxena delivered the ruling on Wednesday on a petition filed by a couple challenging the registration of an FIR lodged by the woman's mother under Section 87 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (kidnapping or abducting or inducing a woman to compel her to marry) at Jaitipur police station in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district.

The couple also contended that they feared for their lives and had sought police protection. "There is no offence of the kind where a married man, staying with an adult in a live-in relationship, by consent of the other person, can be prosecuted for any offence whatsoever," the court said.

The bench sought to separate morality from law, stressing that the former could not influence the court's action.

SC slams disclosure of rape victim's identity

Asks HC to ensure strict compliance with anonymity law

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

INDIFFERENCE

- SC criticises general indifference of courts
- Orders strict compliance with 2019 Nipun Saxena ruling
- Section 228-A IPC bars naming survivors
- Sets aside Himachal HC judgment in 9-year-old's rape case
- Says that victim's name used throughout records

The Supreme Court "deprecated in the strongest terms" the disclosure of the identity of a minor girl in a rape case and directed all Registrars General of the High Courts to ensure strict compliance with its 2019 ruling in the Nipun Saxena case, which mandates non-disclosure of a victim's identity.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N Kotiswar Singh referred to the proscription under Section 228-A of the IPC, saying, "This has been the long-standing position in law, but it has not been followed. The primary reason, one supposes, is the general indifference of the courts below and possibly even the lack of awareness of the deep stigma that follows such offences."

Setting aside the Himachal Pradesh High Court's judgment that had reversed the conviction of a man for raping a nine-year-old girl, the bench noted that the victim's name was treated like that of any other witness and was freely used throughout the record.

In its March 24 judgment, the SC noted that as far back as 1983, the legislature had introduced a provision in the IPC to protect the identity of victims of sexual offences under Section 376, in the aftermath of State of Maharashtra versus Tukaram (1979). "The amendment was made apparently to address a specific mischief that emerged starkly from the way sexual offence cases were handled: the public disclosure of a survivor's identity," the bench said.

Social stigma

Before 1983, the apex court pointed out, there was no statutory bar on publishing the name or particulars of a woman against whom a sexual offence was alleged. As a result, court reporting and media coverage could expose survivors to social stigma, ostracism and lifelong reputational harm.

"This perspective is reflected in academic discussions on the evolution of the law on sexual assault, which identify the 1983 amendments as marking the beginning of a victim-centred orientation in Indian criminal law; protections such as in-camera trials, evidentiary presumptions, and anonymity were designed to reduce the barriers and fears that previously discouraged reporting and effective prosecution of sexual offences," the bench said.

FESTIVE SPIRIT

Young girls dressed as goddesses are offered food during 'Nav Kanya-Bhairav' on the ninth day of 'Chaitra Navaratri' festival in Varanasi on Friday. PTI

7 killed as avalanche hits J&K's Zoji La

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

At least seven people were feared dead after a massive avalanche struck the high-altitude Zoji La on Friday, burying several vehicles and leaving many others stranded along the strategic Srinagar–Leh highway.

Officials said the avalanche hit the stretch between Zero Point and Minimarg in the afternoon, when multiple vehicles were moving along the treacherous corridor connecting the Kashmir Valley with Ladakh.

The force of the snowslide swept vehicles off the road and buried several under thick layers of snow, triggering panic among passengers.

Rescue teams comprising the police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) were rushed to the site. Operations were underway to locate and evacuate those trapped, though efforts were slowed by inclement weather and the risk of fresh avalanches in the area.

Preliminary reports indicated that at least seven persons had died and several others were injured, but officials said the final toll would be confirmed only after all affected vehicles are traced and cleared.

IN BRIEF

HC junks probe plea against RIL, Mukesh Ambani

MUMBAI, DHNS: The Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed a petition seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation probe against Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and its Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani over the alleged unlawful extraction of natural gas from the Krishna-Godavari Basin of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.

Kingpin of cyber slavery network arrested

MUMBAI, DHNS: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested the kingpin of an international crime syndicate involved in trafficking unsuspecting Indian citizens to cyber scam compounds in Myanmar. The accused has been identified as Sunil Nellathu Ramakrishnan alias Krish, a resident of Mumbai. The cyber scam compounds are mainly located in Myanmar's Myawaddy region, notably KK Park.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

I NEED A GAG GIFT TO GIVE MY BOSS AT OUR OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY
HA! THIS ONE'S PERFECT! "WORLD'S BEST BOSS"
THAT'S NOT REALLY A GAG GIFT, IS IT?
ABSOLUTELY! AS SOON AS HE OPENS IT, EVERYONE WILL KNOW IT'S A GAG

Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

Marvin

TO MAKE MY LIFE STORY MORE EXCITING FOR A MOVIE...
...I'M MAKING MY CHARACTER INTO A SPACE FIGHTER FROM ANOTHER GALAXY!
WELL, WITH YOUR LOOKS, THEY WON'T HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IKKOS

DYOML

MOIWDS

SAETTT

I'm all set. Are you going to buy that?
After a quick glance, dairy history is not my thing.
SHE'D PICKED UP THE BOOK ABOUT THE HISTORY OF FAT-FREE MILK AND ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LOUSY ADOPT PILLOW GIGGLE
Answer: She inherited enough to start her business thanks to her grandfather's — GOOD WILL

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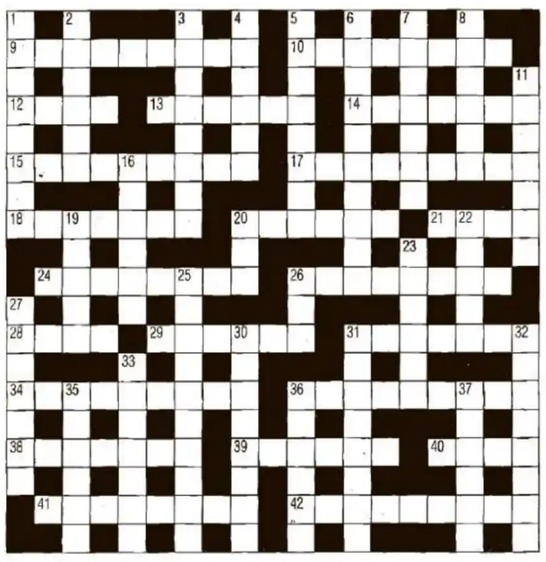
CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 4033



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
9 The fairest of the fair (3,6)
10 To hide it, put on an overcoat (5,3)
12 In a twinkling and words to that effect (4)
13 He doesn't allow colours (6)
14 Think it's a trap I myself set outside (7)
15 Had deteriorated and was taking dope? (4,2,3)
17 Someone important in the dairy? (3,6)
18 Follow on and acquit themselves really well (7)
20 I would have gone running out to get him (6)
21 So little time-an hour-to ourselves (4)
24 Does try to enter the competitions (8)
26 It's not simple to make up (8)
28 On the subject of surplus (4)
29 Cold tart (6)
31 Gets on to Peg, who won't talk to one on the phone (5,2)
34 Required and rang to get (6,3)
36 Adam? (5,4)
38 He doesn't believe in buying stock (7)
39 Lets the sow loose after all (6)
40 Like that far-fetched story about the giant? (4)
41 The summit is a strange place to find a pub in (8)
42 Making sure, or one will be wrong (9)

DOWN
1 Getting the ticket a long time after for the trips (8)
2 Puzzled to find oneself on the ground beside the horse? (6)
3 Topless is best of all (8)
4 Dear girl, come back in for a little sustenance (6)
5 Room for more in the nursery (5,3)
6 Din in to the groom that's where he should eat (6,4)
7 Join the English diplomat (7)
8 "A broken flute", I put in, "is useless" (6)
11 Go back? Just the opposite! (7)
16 Understanding, try to put it away inside (6)
19 It tastes spicy and cold, dear (5)
20 Talk about fuel? (3)
22 Measures the pointers on the dial (5)
23 Does it melt when the music's hot? (6)
25 What the body-snatchers charged for their wares? (5,5)
26 Transport back from the races (3)
27 Agrees it's not for dogs (7)
30 Warn one then about the rate of exchange (8)
31 Listen for the funny word in it: "travail" (4,4)
32 If you don't look at it so closely, it's very good (8)
33 Shutting up with the salt water fish (7)
35 Dog not nervous of shooting (6)
36 Had sunk, without exception, into the morass (6)
37 It's a river, lady, and a great big one! (6)

ACROSS
9 Doctor (9)
10 Novel (8)
12 Stack of paper (4)
13 Fall over (6)
14 Student (7)
15 Inject against disease (9)
17 Jurisdiction over naval affairs (9)
18 Cartilage (7)
20 Sanctuary (6)
21 Norse god (4)
24 Severe headache (8)
26 Open to suggestion (8)
28 Betting machine (4)
29 Expel air from the nose (6)
31 Kept at a low temperature (7)
34 Eroded by wind and rain (9)
36 Something with no chance of success (4,5)
38 Endow with new skills (7)
39 Great noise (6)
40 Group of countries with com mon interest (4)
41 Rose up against authority (8)
42 Get rid of (9)

DOWN
1 Fair (8)
2 Device producing electricity (6)
3 Feign (8)
4 Make possible (6)
5 Herb (8)
6 Small rodent (10)
7 Competition (7)
8 Sensual (6)
11 Swiss cheese (7)
16 Says (6)
19 Fool (5)
20 Monkey (3)
22 Meat prepared for Muslims (5)
23 Crazy person (6)
25 Stupidly (10)
26 Playing card (3)
27 Waiter on a ship (7)
30 Fabled S. American city (2,6)
31 Merely superficial (8)
32 Soaked (8)
33 Less expensive (7)
35 Stag's horn (6)
36 Small securable compartment (6)
37 Remove a cargo (6)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12382

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, F-logs 6, Pi-e-ty 9, RA-meses 10, Pro-ud 11, Plebs 12, Slope 13, Respect 15, Sap 17, Arty 18, Grouse 19, Stony 20, Trumps 22, R-ADA 24, Yet 25, I'm-moral 26, S-ton-e 27, Sta-I-n 28, Felix 29, GI-ves in 30, Crank 31, Bat-he
DOWN: 2, Large-r 3, Grumpy 4, S-ad. 5, Deal-T 6, Peppery 7, Isle 8, To-bias 12, Scots 13, Ratty 14, Stout 15, S-U-gar 16, Pedal 18, Gnome 19, S-put-nik 21, Rector 22, Row-Ena 23, Dan-ish 25, Inner 26, Si-G-n 28, Fib

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Stale 6, Smart 9, En suite 10, Bland 11, Aside 12, Berth 13, Resides 15, Bet 17, Oral 18, Volume 19, Token 20, Slight 22, Alps 24, Ten 25, Compere 26, Dream 27, Tiara 28, Tacit 29, Apparel 30, Enemy 31, Asked
DOWN: 2, Teller 3, Lentil 4, End 5, Tunes 6, Station 7, Mesh 8, Redeem 12, Begot 13, Roast 14, Satin 15, Bugle 16, Tense 18, Venom 19, Therapy 21, Legion 22, Appals 23, Praise 25, Canal 26, Dram 28, Tea

◆SU-DO-KU-6865◆

8		4			9		1	
				8				2
	2	7	5			9		
7					6	3		
2								9
		5	3					1
		1			3	2	6	
5				6				
	3		1			8		4

hard

6	2	7	4	1	3	9	5	8
8	1	5	9	7	2	4	6	3
3	4	9	8	5	6	2	7	1
7	3	2	5	8	4	6	1	9
1	9	4	3	6	7	8	2	5
5	8	6	2	9	1	7	3	4
2	5	3	7	4	9	1	8	6
4	7	1	6	3	8	5	9	2
9	6	8	1	2	5	3	4	7

SOLUTION TO 6864

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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U1	S1	B3	E1	R1	T1	U1		RACK 1
P3	I1	R1	Y4	W4	F4	L1	1st Letter Triple	RACK 2
C3	T1	T1	W4	H4	I1	Y4	Triple Word Score	RACK 3
M3	I1	A1	S1	R1	G2	N1		RACK 4

PAR SCORE 125-135
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

F4	A1	L1	L1	A1	C3	Y4	RACK 1 =	95
E1	O1	L1	I1	T1	H4	S1	RACK 2 =	60
C3	O1	N1	N1	I1	V4	E1	RACK 3 =	62
I1	M3	I1	T1	A1	T1	E1	RACK 4 =	68
							JUDD'S TOTAL	285

PAR SCORE 185-195

HITORI-3319

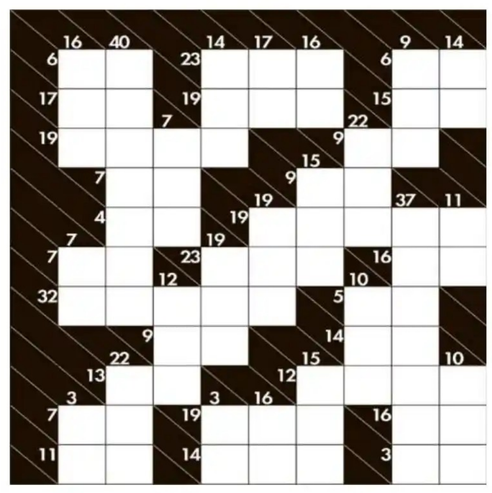
2	6	5	4	7	1	3	1
8	1	6	5	4	3	8	1
6	3	7	4	1	6	4	2
1	5	2	6	6	4	7	5
3	4	1	2	5	6	1	7
1	2	6	7	6	5	1	3
5	4	1	5	6	7	5	4
1	7	4	3	2	4	5	8

SOLUTION TO 3318

6	8	1	■	7	5	2	■
■	3	2	7	■	8	■	6
8	7	■	3	2	6	4	5
5	6	8	1	■	4	■	7
1	■	7	■	5	3	8	■
■	1	6	2	4	■	5	3
3	■	4	6	8	2	■	1
7	2	3	8	6	■	1	4

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3319



SOLUTION TO 3318

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3868

■					4			5
4	■						■	
	8	■				■		
9		2	■		■			
3				■				
			7		6		1	
		■		7	8	■	5	1
	3	6				7	■	
■			2				4	■

SOLUTION TO 3867

8	2	3	4	7	1	5	9	6
7	6	4	5	9	8	2	1	3
9	5	1	6	3	2	7	4	8
6	4	5	7	8	9	3	2	1
1	3	7	2	4	6	8	5	9
2	9	8	3	1	5	6	7	4
3	1	2	8	5	4	9	6	7
4	8	6	9	2	7	1	3	5
5	7	9	1	6	3	4	8	2

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Iran-linked hackers breach FBI director's personal email

WASHINGTON, AP: A pro-Iranian hacking group claimed Friday to have hacked an account of FBI Director Kash Patel and has posted online what appear to be years-old photographs of him, along with a work resume and other personal documents. Many of those records appeared to be more than a decade old.

Kash Patel

"Kash Patel, the current head of the FBI, who once saw his name displayed with pride on the agency's headquarters, will now find his name among the list of successfully hacked victims," said a message posted Friday from the group Handala.

The message was accompanied by more than a half dozen photos of Patel, including ones of him standing beside an antique sports car and another with a cigar in his mouth. The group also said that it was making available for download emails and other documents from Patel's account. Many of the records appeared to relate to his personal travels and business from more than 10 years ago.

The FBI had no immediate comment on Friday, but a person familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss nonpublic information confirmed that a personal email account of Patel's had been breached.

It was not clear when the hack claimed by Handala might have occurred, but news reports from December 2024 said that Patel had been informed by FBI that he had been targeted as part of an Iranian hack.

Israel hits Iran nuclear sites as Washington trails end to war

IRGC warns that they would strike industrial sites in the region

TEHRAN, AFP

US-Israeli strikes hit two Iranian nuclear facilities on Friday, as America's top diplomat left a meeting with his G7 counterparts to declare that Washington expects its military operation to prove victorious within a couple of weeks.

Iran threatened retaliation against industrial sites in the region, with no clear end to the conflict in sight and oil and stock markets still in turmoil over the fallout from the fighting, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

"When we are done with them here in the next couple weeks, they will be weaker than they've been in recent history," Rubio told reporters in Paris after G7 talks.

Rubio also said that he had won support from his G7 colleagues to oppose Iran's attempts to impose a toll on ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz, a key sea lane for oil and gas shipments from the Gulf.

"Not only is this illegal, it's unacceptable, it's dangerous to the world, and it's important that the world have a plan to confront it," Rubio said.

In a joint statement, the G7 foreign ministers "reiterated the absolute necessity to permanently restore safe and toll-free freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz" and called for "an immediate cessation of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure".

Iran had sent "messages" to the American side but had not responded to a US-proposed peace plan, Rubio said.

Iranian media reported a US-Israeli attack on the Khondab heavy water complex in central Iran, citing a local official, while the country's atomic energy agency said a uranium processing plant 600 kilometres away in Ardakan was also hit.

Israel's army confirmed that it struck the two facilities, while the Iranian sources said there was no release of radioactive material at either site.

Two steel plants, Khuzestan in southwest Iran and Mobarakeh in the country's centre, were also hit, drawing threats of retaliation.

Trump has insisted the Islamic republic wants to "make a deal" and extended a deadline for Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz or face the destruction of its energy assets from Friday to April 6.

Meanwhile Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned that they would strike industrial sites in the region in response to the attacks.

The Guards warned civilians working in such plants to "leave their workplaces immediately".

Firefighters look for victims and inspect damages at a residential building in southern Tehran on Friday, nearly a month into the Middle East war. AFP

UN moves to create mechanism to safeguard Hormuz trade

REUTERS: The United Nations said on Friday it was setting up a task force to design a mechanism to keep trade flowing through the Strait of Hormuz, warning that disruptions caused by the Iran war risked greater food shortages and humanitarian crises worldwide.

"Immediate action is essential to mitigate these consequences," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

UN Under-Secretary-General Jorge Moreira da Silva, executive director of the United Nations Office for Project Services, will lead the project, Dujarric said.

He said the envisaged task force would draw inspiration from other UN initiatives, including the Black Sea Grain Initiative for Ukraine and the UN2720 Mechanism for Gaza.

"The task force will now be in touch with all the relevant member states to see how this can be operationalized," Dujarric said. "We hope that all member states involved will support this, especially for the sake of people ... who are already being impacted."

> **"The task force will now be in touch with all the relevant member states to see how this can be operationalised"**

Disrupted fertilizer shipments and soaring energy prices are threatening fresh food-price surges in vulnerable countries, risking a years-long setback just as many were emerging from successive global shocks, UN and other experts warn.

An analysis released by the UN World Food Programme last week warned that tens of millions more people will face acute hunger if the Iran war runs through to June.

Iran warns hotels housing US troops will be attacked

▸ Iran's military has warned that hotels housing US soldiers across the region would be targets in its war with the United States and Israel, reports AFP.

"When all the Americans (forces) go into a hotel, then from our perspective that hotel becomes American," armed forces spokesman Abolfazl Shekarchi told state television on Thursday.

"Should we just stand by and let the Americans strike us? When we respond, naturally we have to strike wherever they are."

War sparks global fertiliser shortage

▸ Farmers around the world are feeling the squeeze of the Iran war. Gas prices have shot up and fertiliser supplies are waning due to Tehran's near shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz in retaliation for US and Israeli bombing, reports AP.

The fertiliser shortage is putting the livelihood of farmers in developing countries - already troubled by rising temperatures and erratic weather systems - further at risk, and could lead to people everywhere paying more for food. The poorest farmers in the Northern Hemisphere rely on fertiliser imports from the Gulf, and the shortage comes just as planting season begins, said Carl Skau, deputy executive director of the World Food Programme.

WORLD AT GLANCE

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (G7 FMM), in France, on Friday. PTI

At G7 meet, Jaishankar flags food, fuel and energy concerns

▸ As the world grappled with the cascading fallout of the West Asian conflict, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar flagged the concerns of Global South nations over energy, food, and fuel security, while underlining the urgent need for global governance reforms, reports PTI from New Delhi.

In an address at a G7 foreign ministers' meeting in France on Thursday, the external affairs minister also spoke about the importance of resilient trade corridors and supply chains against the backdrop of the uncertainties arising from the conflict in West Asia.

While India is not a G7 member, it has been invited as a partner country by France, the current chair of the powerful bloc. Besides India, France invited Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Brazil to attend the G7 foreign ministers' meeting at Abbaye des-Vaux-de-Cernay.

On the amrgins of the G7 meeting, Jaishankar held separate conversations with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Saudia Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha. It is understood that the West Asia crisis figured prominently in the conversations. The external affairs minister described his talks with Rubio as "useful".

Hamas mulls disarming in Gaza

▸ The Hamas militant group is weighing a new proposal for disarming its fighters in Gaza, a major concession that would clear the way for US President Donald Trump's plan for rebuilding the war-ravaged territory, reports AP from Jerusalem.

How Hamas responds, expected in the coming days or weeks, has great implications for Gaza's 2 million people, who have been living in a grim limbo since a ceasefire took effect nearly six months ago.

Hamas' founding charter calls for armed resistance against Israel, and it has been reluctant to give up an arsenal, including rockets, anti-tank missiles and explosives, that lies at the heart of its identity.

For that reason, it is far from certain the group will comply. Hamas has indicated it is unhappy with a US-backed proposal currently under discussion. The US-Israel war against Iran has further complicated the Gaza efforts, threatening more delays as it draws the region's attention.

China announces US trade probe

▸ China announced two separate investigations on Friday into US trade practices in response to Washington's probes this month of Beijing, including over alleged forced labour, reports AFP from Beijing.

The probes into alleged disruptions to the global supply chain and trade of "green products" were "in response to the two US Section 301 investigations against China", a commerce ministry spokesperson said in a statement. The United States launched trade investigations this month into dozens of countries, including China, centred on overproduction and importing goods made with forced labour.

The efforts came weeks after the US Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump's global tariffs, saying he had exceeded his authority in tapping emergency economic powers to impose them on virtually all countries.

Balen Shah takes oath as Nepal's youngest PM at 35

'Look forward to working closely': Modi greets Shah

KATHMANDU, PTI

Rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah -- popularly known as 'Balen' -- was on Friday sworn in as Nepal's new prime minister, around six months after the dramatic collapse of the KP Sharma Oli government in a unprecedented youth movement.

The 35-year-old Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) leader was sworn in by President Ram Chandra Paudel at a ceremony at the President's Office. The RSP had registered a landslide victory in this month's parliamentary elections.

Shah, a former mayor of Kathmandu, is the youngest leader to be democratically elected to the top office in the Himalayan nation. He is also the first person from the Madhes region to become the prime minister.

Nepal's outgoing interim PM Sushila Karki (L) with newly appointed PM Balendra Shah during the latter's swearing-in ceremony, in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Friday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Shah shortly after the swearing-in ceremony, and said he was looking forward to working closely with his Nepalese counterpart to take forward India-Nepal ties.

"Your appointment reflects the trust reposed in your leadership by the people of Nepal. I look forward to working closely with you to take India-Nepal friendship and cooperation to even greater heights for the mutual benefit of our two peoples," PM Modi posted on X.

Nepal is important for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship.

Land-locked Nepal relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services. Nepal's access to the sea is through India, and it imports a predominant proportion of its requirements from and through India.

US moves to curb offshore call centres

WASHINGTON, PTI

The Federal Communications Commission has mooted proposals to encourage businesses to bring back to the US call centre jobs that are usually outsourced to companies in countries such as India, the Philippines or South Africa.

In a statement here, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) said that over the past few decades, many corporations shifted their customer service and call centre operations from America to a range of foreign countries, with nearly 70 per cent of US companies outsourcing at least one department.

"American consumers deserve call centres that speak proficient English, provide clear answers, and are based here at home, not halfway around the world," FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said in a statement.

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is a multi-billion dollar sector in India with employees workforce running into several lakhs.

The Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), adopted by the FCC on Thursday, has sought comments from the public on ways to encourage and facilitate the onshoring of call centres; steps that can be taken to improve customer service and data security and ways to combat illegal robocall scams that originate inside foreign call centres.

"I welcome today's NPRM to address risks to Americans that originate from call centres located overseas," FCC Commissioner Olivia Trusty said in a statement on Thursday. The FCC has sought comments from the public about ideas such as empowering consumers to transfer calls to a US-based location and requiring that calls involving certain types of sensitive information be handled domestically.

Oscars to leave Hollywood in 2029: Academy

LOS ANGELES, AP: The Oscars are leaving Hollywood. In 2029, the year the telecast moves from ABC to YouTube, the ceremony itself will move from its longtime home at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood to downtown Los Angeles and the Peacock Theater, 9 miles (14.5 kilometers) away.

The Academy announced Thursday that it has reached a 10-year agreement with AEG, which operates the LA Live complex where the Peacock Theater sits.

It's a surprising move, given that the Dolby was developed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences itself, expressly as a home for the Oscars.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public, all financial institutions, governmental authorities that Mavinakere Estate, (the erstwhile partnership firm) comprising of 714 acres of coffee, tea and areca plantations including Tea Factory in different survey numbers situated at Kalasa Village, Kalasa Taluk, Chikkamagaluru District has been dissolved as held by the Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Bombay, with effect from 13-11-1982. Since then, Mavinakere Estate is being run as an Association of persons (Co-ownership).

Regarding the Division of Mavinakere Estate, RFA No. 78/2013 is pending on the file of Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka at Bengaluru. Further FDP No. 30/2012 is also pending for consideration on the file of Senior Civil Judge, Mudigere, Chikkamagaluru District.

During the Pendency of the above proceedings, one Mr. Rupin .P. Kotecha S/o Late Prabhudas .D. Kotecha, a British Citizen and a Charted Accountant along with his father late.Prabhudas .D. Kotecha fraudulently with malafide intentions had created a false / fake document styled as "Partnership Deed" in the name of Mavinakere Estate dated 22-2-2020, duly registered in the office of the Registrar of Firms, Chikkamagaluru on 21-5-2020 and has also created fake Bank account, PAN Card and GST in the name of Mavinakere Estate and on the strength of the said fake documents has tried to take physical possession of Mavinakere Estate, which has been resisted by the Management. The Hon'ble Senior Civil Judge, Chikkamagaluru vide its Judgment dated 26-02-2026 in O.S. No. 82/2020 has held that, the fake partnership deed dated 22-02-2020 as illegal and Void and not binding on the Plaintiffs in the suit. Further, the Registrar of Firms, Chikkamagaluru has been directed to struck off the entries relating to the fake Partnership Deed.

It has come to the notice of the Management that Mr. Rupin Prabhudas Kotecha is trying to Sell/Lease the Mavinakere Estate on the strength of illegal documents. Therefore, the general public, financial institutions, banks and other authorities are hereby cautioned not to deal with Mr. Rupin Prabhudas Kotecha relating to the Mavinakere Estate in any manner. If any transactions takes place with the said Rupin Prabhudas Kotecha, relating to Mavinakere Estate, the same is not binding on the legal heirs of other deceased partners of the dissolved Partnership Firm.

H.N.M. PRASAD, Advocate
M/s. H.N.M. PRASAD & ASSOCIATES,
No. 105, 1st Floor, Embassy Center,
Crescent Road, Seshadripuram,
Bengaluru-560 001.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ ಯಾದಗಿರಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಯಾದಗಿರಿ
(ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೋಶ)
ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08473 253288 E-mail: ka.yadgiri.dudc@gmail.com
ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್: 08473 253701 : dudc_yadgiri@yahoo.com
ಕಡತ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ/ಜಿನಕೋ/ಯೋಜನೆ/3ನೇ ತಂಡ / /2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:27.03.2026

~:ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ:~ (ಇ–ಪ್ರೋಕ್ಯುರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ)

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕಾನೂನು – 1999 ಹಾಗೂ ನಿಯಮಾವಳಿಗಳು –2000 ರಂತೆ ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೊಂದಿಯಿಸಿದ (ರೆಜಿಸ್ಟ್ರೇಷನ್) ಏಜೆನ್ಸಿದಾರರಿಂದ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ kppp.karnataka.gov.in ರ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ದಿನಾಂಕದಂದು ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕಚೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು.

01) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27.03.2026 02) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ 02.04.2026 Time :05.30 PM 03) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ 04.04.2026 Time :10.30 AM

1) Indent No.: DMA/2025-26/ SE7598. **Name of the works:** Providing Consultanacy Services As Project Management Consultent For All Development & Maintenance Work, To Be Taken Up In Urban Local Bodies Of Yadgir District Under SFC(United) (CA, SCSP, TSP), SFC Drinking water Supply, SFC (Special for Road & Drain), SFC(Special for Buildings), SBM 1.0 & 2.0, 15th Finance all components and other schemes Works At All Urban Local Bodies Of Yadgir District. **Project Cost (Rs. in Crore):** 10.07. **EMD:** 75,000/-.

ಷರತ್ತು: ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್‌ನ ಷರತ್ತುಗಳ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು
ವಾ.ಸಾ.ಸಂ.ಇ/ಯಾದಗಿರಿ/617/ಕೆ.ಎಸ್.ಎಂ.ಸಿ.&ಎ/2025–26 ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ನಗರಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕೋಶ ಯಾದಗಿರಿ

S. E. RAILWAY E– TENDER

Tender Notice No. PCMM/GENL/TP/2026/10 **Dated: 27/03/2026**

The Principal Chief Materials Manager, South Eastern Railway, Hd. Qrs. Office (5th Floor), New administrative Building, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-tenders which have been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in** as follows. All the tenders will be Closed at 14.00 hrs.

SL. No.	Tender No.	Closing Date	Brief Description	Qty.	EMD (in Rs.)
1	33253167	29/04/26	Kit for Speed Sensor etc.	225 Nos.	4,01,400/-
2	38253963B	15/04/26	Air Brake Hose Coupling for Brake Pipe etc.	19268 Nos.	6,28,050/-
3	33263060	20/04/26	Flex Ball cable Long G=4024 mm etc.	270 Nos.	12,83,990/-
4	30263483	15/04/26	Equalising Stay (Forged type) for lower.	4400 Nos.	1,50,260/-
5	31265009	22/04/26	Main Compressor for MEMU Motor Coaches.	10 Nos.	1,02,370/-
6	75251721	21/04/26	Densified Thermal Bonded Polyester Blocks for seat and berths of SCN Coaches with Density of 60 kg/cu.mtr.	192 Set.	2,64,610/-
7	IF265113A	16/04/26	Supply and Installation of One Set CT 16 Slice Scanning System etc.	01. Set.	3,90,000/-
8	29265006	16/04/26	MOTOR SUSPENSION UNIT etc.	32 Set.	1,45,380/-
9	50251659A	22/04/26	Solid Polythene Insulated Fully Filled, Polythene Sheathed Underground Telecom Cable etc.	15 Km.	1,47,760/-
10	60265112	30/04/26	Manufacture and supply of Pre-Stressed Mono Block Concrete Sleeper (sets) etc.	658 Set.	20,00,000/-
11	Bid Number: GEM/2026/B/7388791	15/04/26	Professional Large Format Display.	63 Nos.	1,19,700/-
12	IG265380	27/04/26	Industrial PC.	107 Nos.	3,23,420/-

Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full Details/ Description/Specification of the tenders and submit their Bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **N.B:** Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders & any Corrigendum published thereafter. **(PR-1359)**

Don't Miss
Tomorrow's DH on Sunday

DH DECCAN HERALD

BIG PICTURE — Bipolar Disorder: The silent urban crisis
BOOKS — The wicked humour of Hot Butter Cuttlefish.
ART & PURSUITS — When waste is our witness...
TRAVEL — The sights and sounds of Monterosso al Mare.
GENDER — Why are women more prone to autoimmune disorders?
FOOD & DRINK — All the chutneys you can eat!

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C / 84 Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Mohd. Feroz, S/o.Late Mohd. Sirajuddin, R/o.: H. No.: 1-77/6/BM-11, K.G. Halli, Bangalore, Karnataka** and **House No. 14, First Floor, First Cross, First Main Road, Peace Garden, 2nd Block, 2nd Stage, HBR Layout, Yaseen Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka** has committed (or is suspected to has committed) the offence in a case vide **E-FIR No.014173/2024 dated 17.05.2024 U/S 379/411/413/482/120-B/34 IPC** registered at **P.S Kirti Nagar, Delhi, Presently under investigation with ER-1, Crime Branch, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued stating that the said accused **Mohd. Feroz** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that accused **Mohd. Feroz** is absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Mohd. Feroz**, accused of **E-FIR No.14173/2024 dated 17.05.2024 U/S 379/411/413/482/120-B/34 IPC, P.S Kirti Nagar, Delhi, Presently under investigation with ER-1, Crime Branch, Delhi** is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before **05.05.2026.**

By Order, Ms. Vasundhara Azad
Chief Judicial Magistrate, West,
Court No. 146, First Floor,
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/3969/Crime/2026
(Court Matter)

Bourses dive over 2% amid rising crude prices, geopolitical crises

Brent crude jumps 1.72% to $109.9 per barrel

MUMBAI, PTI

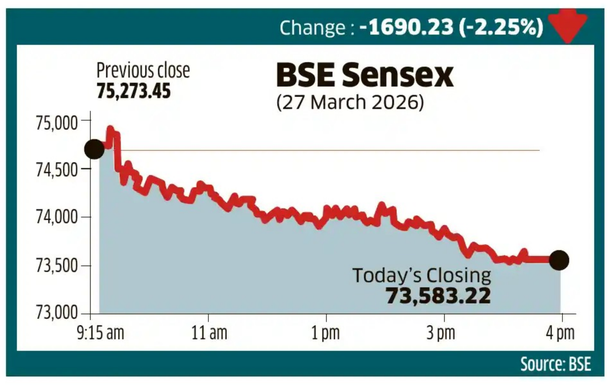
Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled over 2% on Friday after a two-day rally, in tandem with a global selloff, as investor sentiment weakened due to uncertainties over geopolitical tensions.

Crude prices staying above the $100 per barrel mark, the rupee's fall to record lows, and unabated foreign fund outflows also added to the gloom.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,690.23 points, or 2.25%, to settle at 73,583.22. During the day, it plunged 1,739.04 points, or 2.31%, to 73,534.41.

A total of 3,544 stocks declined, while 822 advanced and 135 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 486.85 points, or 2.09%, to end at 22,819.60.

In a holiday-shortened week, the BSE benchmark lost 949.74 points or 1.27%, and the Nifty tanked 294.9 points or 1.27%. "Investor sentiment remained fragile due to a lack of clarity surrounding geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, which once again pushed crude oil prices above the $100 mark. In addition, persistent FII outflows and sharp weakness in the rupee further weighed on risk appetite," Ajit Mishra — SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.



From the 30-Sensex firms, RIL dropped the most by 4.55%, followed by InterGlobe Aviation, Bajaj Finance, SBI, Eternal and HDFC Bank. In contrast, TCS, Bharti Airtel and Power Grid were the gainers.

The BSE MidCap Select index dropped 2.12%, and the SmallCap Select index declined 1.77%. All sectoral indices ended lower.

PSU Bank tumbled 3.88%, realty (3.10%), services (2.86%), auto (2.79%), Bankex (2.70%), financial services (2.69%), consumer discretionary (2.52%), and consumer durables (2.50%).

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 1.72% to $109.9 per barrel.

Silver plunges Rs 11,250/kg on global cues

NEW DELHI, PTI: Precious metal prices dropped up to 5%, with silver plunging by Rs 11,250 to Rs 2.30 lakh per kg, while gold declined to Rs 1.47 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday.

Market analysts said that bullion prices remained volatile as movements in crude oil and global cues influenced investor sentiment.

In the international markets, spot gold gained $37.19, or nearly 1%, to $4,416 per ounce, while the white metal was trading 0.23% higher at $68.12 per ounce.

Rupee settles at all-time low of 94.85 against dollar

Currency under pressure from continued sales by foreign investors

MUMBAI, PTI

The rupee slumped by a massive 89 paise to close at a historic low of 94.85 against the US dollar on Friday, as concerns of higher crude oil prices weighed heavily on the currency and overall macroeconomic outlook.

Forex traders said the rupee is succumbing to the pressure exerted by continued sales by foreign investors and a stronger greenback amid uncertainties over the West Asia conflict.

Sustained dollar demand and energy-led inflation risks are keeping the rupee under stress, they said, adding that bias remains weak unless crude prices show a meaningful correction.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 94.18 and breached the 94.50-mark for the first time. The domestic unit settled for the day at 94.85 against the US dollar, down 89 paise from its previous close.

The rupee had slumped 20 paise to close at a record low of 93.96 against the US dollar on Wednesday.

The rupee continued its sharp weakness, as rising crude prices intensify pressure on India's import bill. The concern of higher crude for a prolonged period is weighing heavily on the currency and overall macro outlook, said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst — Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

"Sustained dollar demand and energy-led inflation risks are keeping the rupee under stress. Technically, 94.00 now acts as key resistance, while the next crucial support is seen near 95.00. Bias remains weak unless crude prices show a meaningful correction," Trivedi added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.04% higher at 99.94.

India's forex reserves dropped by $11.413 billion to $698.346 billion during the week ended March 20 due to a sharp decrease in gold reserves, the RBI said on Friday.

The Centre is planning to mobilise Rs 8 lakh crore through dated securities during the April-September period of 2026-27 to fund the revenue gap, the finance ministry said on Friday.

Gross Market Borrowings in BE 2026-27 were Rs 17.20 lakh crore. Since the Budget presentation, switches of G-Sec were conducted, reducing Gross Market borrowing to Rs 16.09 lakh crore, it said.

Biocon appoints Shreehas Tambe as CEO & MD, Kedar Upadhye as CFO

BENGALURU, DHNS: Biocon Limited, a global biopharmaceutical company, on Friday announced the appointment of Shreehas Tambe as its Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, with effect from April 1, 2026, following approvals from the Nomination & Remuneration Committee and the Board of Directors. As the first CEO of the integrated Biocon, he will lead the combined platform spanning biosimilars and generics, strengthening the company's ability to operate at scale and compete effectively in global markets, Biocon said in a statement.

The company has also appointed Kedar Upadhye as Chief Financial Officer of Biocon Limited.

This leadership transition is part of the full integration of Biocon Biologics Limited as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Biocon Limited, creating a simplified and unified corporate structure.

The strengthened enterprise is well-positioned to lead in diabetes, obesity, oncology, and immunology through a differentiated portfolio of biosimilars, insulins, complex generics, and peptides, including GLP-1 therapies.

"Biocon is among the few organisations that have transformed access to life-saving treatments by effectively leveraging science and technology. Our success has been driven by exceptional talent, united by a strong sense of purpose and an unwavering commitment to serving patient needs," Tambe said.

SHREEHAS TAMBE
CEO & MD, Biocon Limited

> Biocon is among the few organisations that have transformed access to life-saving treatments by effectively leveraging science and technology. Our success has been driven by exceptional talent, united by a strong sense of purpose and an unwavering commitment to serving patient needs.

Portfolio expansion

"As we expand our portfolio and global presence, my focus will be on strengthening our foundation, consolidating our business, and accelerating sustainable growth. I am deeply grateful to our visionary Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and the Board of Directors for the trust and confidence placed in me and look forward to building on Biocon's strong legacy to make a meaningful difference for patients worldwide," he further added.

Tambe said Biocon will focus on expanding its portfolio of biosimilars, insulins, generics and peptide-based therapies, including GLP-1. Under his leadership, Biocon will also focus on new areas such as ophthalmology and introduce niche injections in the coming days.

The company also plans to launch new products in several parts of the world, including Canada and Brazil, in the coming days. "Our products are ready and we are awaiting regulatory approvals in Canada," Tambe told *DH*.

The company will also launch new medicines in the US very soon, he mentioned.

Shares of Biocon Limited closed 2.52% down at Rs 370.10 on the Bombay Stock Excahnge on Friday.

Happiest Minds, UnifyApps partner for Enterprise AI adoption

BENGALURU, DHNS: Mid-tier IT services company Happiest Minds on Friday announced a partnership with AI agent and app builder platform for enterprises — UnifyApps.

Through this, the firm will use UnifyApps' AI OS architecture and horizontal platform to help enterprises transform into AI-Native organisations. The partnership will enable clients to unify enterprise knowledge, actionability, and governance through an AI OS architecture that allows enterprises to rewire their business to transition GenAI initiatives from pilots to secure, scalable, production-grade deployments, the company said.

Praveen RP, Co-CEO, GBS, Happiest Minds Technologies, said, "UnifyApps AI OS architecture aligns strongly with our AI First strategy and our focus on delivering scalable, secure, and business-aligned AI solutions. Together, we will help organisations move beyond pilots and unlock tangible value from Generative AI."

UnifyApps' LLM-agnostic design and extensive library of pre-built integrations complement Happiest Minds' deep capabilities in Generative AI, digital engineering, cloud, data, and enterprise modernisation.

As enterprises move beyond experimentation toward enterprise-wide AI adoption, this partnership addresses a critical need: a unified platform that orchestrates AI agents across business workflows, while ensuring governance, interoperability, and scalability, Happiest Minds said in a statement.

Maninder Singh, Chief Growth Officer, Happiest Minds, said, "The future of enterprise AI lies in agentic platforms that can orchestrate intelligence across systems and workflows. By combining our deep domain expertise and GenAI execution capabilities with UnifyApps AI Agent and App Builder Platform, we are uniquely-positioned to help clients become truly AI-Native enterprises."

Recently, Happiest Minds announced that it has 32 Generative AI & Agentic AI use cases that have successfully moved beyond prototypes.

For the quarter ended December 2025, the company's revenue in constant currency grew 7.1% YoY and its total income stood at Rs 60,328 lakh, growing 1.4% QoQ and 8.9% YoY.

Salesforce's new AI Foundry

BENGALURU, DHNS:
Salesforce AI Research has launched AI Foundry, to develop transformative AI innovation for enterprises. It brings together AI research, strategic customers, and academic partners to develop, test, and validate new capabilities designed to move from foundational research to product innovation faster.

As LLMs mature, the gap between what a model can do in isolation and how a system is expected to perform in production has become a central challenge for enterprise adoption. "The problems that matter most for businesses don't live at the model level anymore," said Silvio Savarese, Chief Scientist at Salesforce. "They live at the system level, where components work together to deliver accuracy, consistency, and reliability at scale. AI Foundry is the engine we've built to make that a reality," he said.

Top 7 cities log 7% drop in housing sales

BENGALURU, DHNS

The West Asia war has negatively impacted housing sales in the first quarter of 2026. The top 7 cities in the country have registered a 7% drop in sales at 1,01,675 units worth Rs 1.51 lakh crore in the first quarter ended March 2026, over the fourth quarter of 2025. The last quarter of 2025 witnessed sale of about 1,08,970 units worth Rs 1.60 lakh crore, according to an analysis by independent property consultant Anarock.

Among the top 7 cities, Chennai recorded the steepest fall in housing sales, followed by Pune, NCR and Kolkata, while Bengaluru registered the second-lowest drop in sales.

Chennai sold 5,310 houses in Q1 2026, showing a drop of 18% over Q4 2025, Pune registered a 10% drop in sales at 15,300 units in the quarter, as against 17,000 units sold in Q4 2025. Both NCR and Kolkata registered an 8% drop in sales at 15,190 units and 4,210 units, respectively, in Q1 2026, against 16,525 units and 4,575 units, respectively, in Q4 2025.

Bengaluru logged a drop of 5% in Q1 2026, at 16,440 units, against 17,250 units in Q4 2025. Hyderabad's sales remained flat at 12,425 units, as against 12,435 units in Q4 2025.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಸಹಾಯಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ ಉಪ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ–581325
Telephone No: 08284 233946 Email: acfdandeli96@gmail.com
ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಸ.ಅ.ಸಂ/ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27–03–2026

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

2026–27ನೇ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ ಹಳಿಯಾಳ ಅರಣ್ಯ ವಿಭಾಗದ ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ ಮತ್ತು ಜಗಲಬೇಟ್ ಉಪ ವಿಭಾಗಗಳ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ವಲಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅರಣ್ಯೀಕರಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ (ಸಸಿ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ಸೇರಿ) ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕ ನಿಯಮಗಳನುಸಾರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಗಳ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ (http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) (Re-Tender) ಮರು ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ಡಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 03–04–2026 ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆ ಆಗಿದ್ದು, ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಸಹಾಯಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ, ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ ಉಪ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ ರವರನ್ನು ಕಚೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು (ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ–9483668784).

ಸಹಿ/– ಸಹಾಯಕ ಅರಣ್ಯ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ,
ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ ಉಪ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾಂಡೇಲಿ.
DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/1261/25-26 dt.27.03.26

(An Autonomous Institute of Government of Karnataka)
SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE, BENGALURU.
No:SABVMCRI/E-TENDER/CRYO/16/2025-26 Date:27.03.2026
Tender Notification
e-Tenders is invited from interested eligible firms in accordance with KTPP Act for Purchase & Installation of Required Equipments to Affiliated hospitals of SABVMCRI.
1) The starting date for downloading tender : **27.03.2026** onwards. **2)** The last date for clarifications on tender : **04.04.2026 upto 5.30 P M. 3)** The last date for uploading the tender : **10.04.2026 up to 5.30 PM. 4)** Opening of Tenders (Single Cover) : **13.04.2026 at 10.30 A M.**
For more details pertaining to this tender, contact the Director and Dean/ Assistant Administrator of the Institute during office hours.
Sd/- Director and Dean, SABVMCRI Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/6499/Zen/2025-26

UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, BANGALORE
NAAC A Accredited
Estate Office, Naik Bhavan, GKVK, Bengaluru-560 065
Ph : 2330153-250 / Direct : 23332765
Website : www.gkvkbangalore.edu.in E-mail : eo@uasbangalore.edu.in
No. EO/SPO/e-Proc/24/2025-26 DATED: 25.03.2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-procurement portal only)
The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore has invited Short term Tender in the prescribed form as per Standard Tender Document KG-1, and KG-2 from the reputed firms for the procurement of Equipment's.
Blank Tender Documents can be down loaded from kppp.karnataka.gov.in. **Last date and time for uploading the tender on 04-04-2026 up to 4.00 P.M. The Technical Bid will be opened on 06-04-2026 at 10.30 A.M. The Financial Bid will be opened on 09.04.2026 at 10.30 A.M** in the Tender Committee room of Estate Office. Further details can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours and also refer UAS Website: **www.uasbangalore.edu.in**. Help Desk: **91-8046010000, +91-8068948777, support@eprochelpdesk.com**. The University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.
Sd/-
Estate Officer
DIPR/CP/6506/AKAR/2025-26

Government of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation And Ground Water Development Division, Ballari
IFT No. EE/MI& GWDD/Bly/AE-2/2025-26/2470 Date :25.03.2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (KW-3)
On behalf of Hon'bleGovernor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Division Ballariinvited the tender for the work of under **Head forAccount 4702 Plan LIS** 1 work in Hosapetetaluk andVijayanagaraDist in TwoCover System **Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.112.93lakhs**the tenderersshould download and submitt the tenders from**date : 25.03.2026 to 02.04.2026upto 17.30 hours. Date & Time of opening Technical Bidis on 04.04.2026 at 11.00 hours. Opening of Financial Bidis on 06.04.2026 at 11.00 hours**. Anyother information shouldget by login the website **"KPPP"**http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M.I. & G.W.D. Division, Ballari.
DIPR/Ballari/1190/KSMCA/2025-26

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka Enterprises)
Office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL, No.4 BRLBC Division, Bhadravathi.
No:EE/KNNL/BDN-4/TA/PB-1/4701 Bhadra/ 4th Call Tender Notification No:11/2025-26: Dated: 23.03.2026
Ref : 1) No:EE/KNNL/BDN-4/TA/PB-1/4701 Bhadra/ Tender Notification No:11/2025-26: Dated: 06.10.2025
2) No:EE/KNNL/BDN-4/TA/PB-1/4701 Bhadra/ 2nd Call Tender Notification No:11/2025-26: Dated: 28.11.2025
3) No:EE/KNNL/BDN-4/TA/PB-1/4701 Bhadra/ 3rd Call Tender Notification No:11/2025-26: Dated: 28.01.2026
Short Term Tender Notification-Call-3
(Through KPP Portal only)
Percentage Tenders by KPP portal in the prescribed form is invited by the undersigned on behalf of Managing Director, KNNL, Bangalore from the eligible Contractor under the Head of Account 4701 Bhadra. The No. of work is 01. The approximate cost of amount put to tender is **Rs.4225.15 Lakhs.** The amount of EMD is **Rs.42.25 Lakhs** (by kpp portal) contractors can access and submission of completed e-tendering documents from **25.03.2026 to 16.04.2026 upto 17.30 hours** in the website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Technical Bid will be opened on **17.04.2026 at 17.30 hours** and Financial Bid will be opened on after obtaining approval of technical bid from competent authority. Pre-Bid Meeting on Dtd:**10.04.2026 @ 11.00 Hrs** at O/o Executive Engineer, No.4 BRLBC Division, Bhadravathi. Stipulated period for the completion of work is 18 Months (Including monsoon).For more conditions and details visit website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** OR at undersigned in all working days during office hours on telephone No. 8660573513.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer. KNNL,
No.4, BRLBC Division, Bhadravathi.
DIPR/SMG/No-143-03/zenkar/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA FOREST DEPARTMENT
Deputy Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo / Assistant Conservator of forest office, Chitradurga Sub Division, , Chitradurga, VP Extension, JCR Road, Chitradurga-577 501
Office E-mail ID:**acf.cta@gmail.com** Office Pho: **08194–230402**
No.DD/AMZ/e-Tender/Outsource/2025-26 Date: 20-03-2026
Short term e-Tender
It is hereby notified for the general information of the public that, the Deputy Director & Assistant Conservator of Forests Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo, Chitradurga, a unit of Zoo Authority of Karnataka herein after referred to Tender Inviting Authority, has invited e-Tender for Outsourcing the staff for a period of one year from the date of agreement. For details of tender conditions and for online submission of tender log on to E-procurement portal of Karnataka Government https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in and select the Department: Zoo Authority of Karnataka. Tender Cost Rs.83.96 lakshs
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:-
(1) Last date and time for tender queries and clarifications (over phone during office hours) 30.03.2026 at 11,30 AM **(2)** Last date and time for opening technical bid in the Office of the Executive Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo, Chitradurga & Deputy Conservator of Forests Chitradurga division, Chitradurga. 01.04.2026 at 11.30 AM **(3)** Last date and time for opening financial bid in the Office of the Executive Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo, Chitradurga & Deputy Conservator of Forests Chitradurga division, Chitradurga. 01-04-2026 at 11.31 AM
RO.No.803:DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/2025-26
Sd/-Deputy Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo / Assistant Conservator of forest office, Chitradurga Sub Division.

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Mahalakshmipuram Division, 12th Main, 11th Cross, West of Chord Road, Bengaluru West City Corporation, (Office Phone No: 080-23197031), Bengaluru.
No: EE/MLP/TEND/E-PROC/17/2025-26 Date: 27.03.2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through GOK KPP Portal only)(Single Cover System)
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the work mentioned below from the registered contractors of BWCC or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/ Railways/MES/BBMP or any State Government Organisations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Maintenance of BBMP Buildings in Mahalakshmipuram Constituency. **Estimate Cost:** Rs. 25.00 Lakhs. **Approximate Amount put to tender:** Rs. 21.17 Lakhs. **EMD:** Rs. 42,500/-. **Period of Completion:** 6 Months. **Remarks:** As per KPP Portal.

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from **02.04.2026 after 16.30 hrs.** (2) Last date for Receipt of Queries: **06.04.2026 upto 15.00 hrs.** (3) Last date for uploading the Filled Proposals: **15.04.2026 upto 16.00 hrs.** (4) Date of Opening of Technical Proposals: **16.04.2026 after 16.30 hrs. through KPP Portal.**
Furher details can be had from the office of the above during office hours on all working days or visit KPP Portal website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mahalakshmipuram Division,
Bengaluru West City Corporation

ಕೃಷ್ಣಾ ಭಾಗ್ಯಜಲ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಒಂದು ಉದ್ದಿಮೆ)
ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರ ಕಚೇರಿ,
ಕೃಭಾಜನಿನಿ ನಾಎದಂಕಾ ವಿಭಾಗ, ರೋಡಲಬಂಡಾ–584127
ತಾ: ಲಿಂಗಸುಗೂರು ಜಿ: ರಾಯಚೂರು. email:kbjnlnlbc4@gmail.com
ಸಂ.ಕೃಭಾಜನಿನಿ/ನಾಎದಂಕಾ/ವಿ/ಪಿಬಿ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/25–26/1916 (2ನೇಕರೆ)
ದಿನಾಂಕ: 25.03.2026
ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ಮಾನ್ಯ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಕೃಷ್ಣಾ ಭಾಗ್ಯ ಜಲ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ ಇವರ ಪರವಾಗಿ ನುರಿತ ಸಮಾಲೋಚಕರಿಂದ (Eligible consultancy services providers) **"Consultancy Services for Detailed Survey and Investigation, Preparation of Designs, Drawings, Estimates, Detailed Project Report (DPR), Package estimate, and Draft Tender Documents for filling up of 19 No's of MI/ZP tanks under Koppal lifting Irrigation Scheme in Ron Taluk of Gadag District." KBJNL/2025-26/LI/WORK_INDENT2743/CALL-2** ಎಂಬ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ ದ್ವಿಲಕೋಟೆ ಮೂಲಕ ಶೇಕಡಾವಾರು ದರದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಸದರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು **ದಿನಾಂಕ 27.03.2026 ರಿಂದ 07.04.2026ರ ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ 5.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ವೀಕ್ಷಿಸಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಭರ್ತಿಮಾಡಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಸದರಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಬಿಡ್‌ನ್ನು **ದಿ. 08.04.2026 ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ 5.15 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ** ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು.
ಆಸಕ್ತ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರಿಂಗ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವವರ ಕಚೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ, ಕಚೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.
ಸಹಿ/–
ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರು,
ಕೃಭಾಜನಿನಿ, ನಾಎದಂಕಾ ವಿಭಾಗ,
ರೋಡಲಬಂಡಾ.

One story, two tickets

Dhurandhar's two-part model is not new. As Kill Bill and Gangs of Wasseypur proved, the split works only when the story demands it, writes Amogh Ravindra

Ranveer Singh in 'Dhurandhar' and (right) Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Huma Qureshi in 'Gangs of Wasseypur'. Anurag Kashyap was among the first Indian filmmakers to experiment with the two-part narrative. His 'Gangs of Wasseypur' was released in two parts in 2012 and has since become a cult classic.

Aditya Dhar did not sit down to make 'a two-part film'. He sat down to make 'a film'. Then he shot seven hours of footage and someone had to make the call. That call, made on the edit table in October 2025, turned 'Dhurandhar' into a duology. The original plan was one long film. The footage, the scale, and the narrative complexity made that impossible without the story feeling rushed. So 'Part 1' released in December 2025, 'Part 2' followed in March 2026, and the rest, as they say, is box office history.

The result has sparked a conversation about whether big-budget Indian cinema has found its next big trick. Or just remembered something from the history books that once worked.

In 2012, Anurag Kashyap screened a five-hour film at the Directors' Fortnight section of the Cannes Film Festival. The audience sat through the whole thing. Then came the question of releasing it commercially in India, where no multiplex was going to give one film a five-hour slot. Both parts of 'Gangs of Wasseypur' released the same year, each roughly 150 minutes, made for under 2 million dollars combined. The split was pragmatic, not strategic. It was never about milking a franchise. The material was strong enough that the container didn't matter.

Even 'Ponniyin Selvan', Mani Ratnam's adaptation of Kalki Krishnamurthy's five-volume novel, was shot as two parts from the start because the source material simply demanded the space. Both parts released in 2022 and 2023 to critical and commercial success. Then came the more surprising case: Hemanth M Rao's 'Sapta Saagaradaache Ello' (2023), a quiet Kannada love story split into 'Side A' and 'Side B'. No epic battles, no star-studded ensemble. Just a story that needed two sittings to land. It did.

Shah Rukh Khan's 'King', set for release this year, will reportedly, be a two-part film, following in the success of 'Dhurandhar'.

Fast forward to 2024. 'Indian 2', directed by Shankar and starring Kamal Haasan, had been in production since 2019. Five years, an on-set accident that killed three members of the crew, a legal dispute between the director and producers, and a budget that started at Rs 235 crore and ballooned past Rs 500 crore. The film was split in two out of necessity rather than vision. Released in July 2024, the film was a critical and commercial disaster, barely crossing Rs 150 crore worldwide. 'Indian 3', with 80% of its footage already shot before 'Part 2' even hit theatres, remains in limbo.

Even Kashyap wasn't immune to the temptation. His recent crime comedy 'Nishaanchi' was originally conceived as a streaming release for Prime Video. Riding on 'Wasseypur''s long shadow, the decision was made to split it and release the first part theatrically. It collected less than Rs 2 crore at the domestic box office. Those who appreciated the film preferred watching it in one sitting, either at trial screenings or when both parts released together on OTT. The lesson Kashyap drew from 'Wasseypur' — that a split can work — turned out to be the wrong one. The split worked because the film worked. Not the other way around. Two Indian films, both split in two. One is a classic. One is a cautionary tale. The difference was never the strategy. It was the material.

Hollywood has been having this conversation far longer. In 1973, 'The Three Musketeers' was shot as one film and split into two without telling the cast. The director got sued because the actors had only been paid for one film but found out they had effectively made two. 'Kill Bill' was one film until Harvey Weinstein walked into the edit room and found a four-hour cut. Tarantino's options were cuts or a split. He chose the split. With a combined budget of 60 million dollars, both volumes went on to earn over 330 million dollars. Tarantino still calls it one film. The rest of the world paid for two tickets.

'Harry Potter: Deathly Hallows' validated the model, grossing a combined 2.31 billion dollars. 'Twilight: Breaking Dawn' followed with 1.54 billion dollars. Then 'Divergent: Allegiant' grossed 179 million dollars and never got its Part 2 made. The formula needed the audience to care enough to come back.

The gold standard is 'Dune' and 'Wicked', where the split was a creative decision made before a single frame was shot. Director Jon M Chu announced the 'Wicked' split in April 2022, during pre-production, saying it had become impossible to wrestle the story into a single film without doing damage to it. 'Part 1' grossed over 680 million dollars with a 92% critics score. It worked because the story was built for it from the start.

'Dhurandhar' worked for the same reason. One story, not two half-stories stitched together. When 'Part 1' ends, one doesn't feel cheated. One feels interrupted. That distinction is what most two-part films get wrong. Reports suggest both Shah Rukh Khan's 'King' and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Love and War' are weighing a similar split. A final call on both, reportedly, will be taken on the edit table. The edit table. That is where 'Indian 2' made its call too.

Every split that worked — 'Wasseypur', 'Kill Bill', 'Dune', 'Wicked', and 'Dhurandhar' — earned its length through the story.

Every split that failed was running from its own excess. 'Dhurandhar' was a happy accident. The danger is in assuming the accident was the plan. Someone always finds out. Usually on the edit table.

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to dhonsat @deccanherald.co.in

Beyond its timeless soundtrack and stunning visuals, Yash Chopra's relationship drama is a mature film that's peerless in how accurately it studies the problematic 'good guys', writes Pragyan Mohanty

Kabhi Kabhie at 50: Still strikingly modern

If Yash Chopra's 'Kabhi Kabhie' (1976) were released today, it would be considered too woke. Beyond its timeless soundtrack and stunning visuals, it's a modern, mature film about human contradictions that stands in sharp contrast with present-day Hindi cinema, dominated by hypermasculine, violent, and problematic leading men whose misogyny is either glorified or presented as moral ambiguity. 'Kabhi Kabhie' remains peerless in recognising how even the 'good guys' can be problematic: decent, sensitive men, never crude enough to be dismissed as women-haters, yet likely to let their internalised sexism slip into their words and actions, and how remarkably it confronts them without ever turning didactic. The film is clear: both men and women can be morally ambiguous but women are judged more harshly.

It has Amitabh Bachchan as the 'Angry Young Man' of another kind. Not the aggrieved one from 'Deewaar' (1975) or the traumatised witness to his family's murder in 'Zanjeer' (1973), or the self-punishing recluse in 'Kaala Patthar' (1978).

His character Amit's disgruntlement stems from heartbreak of giving up the two things that define him: his poetry and the woman he loved. From a lover to a loner, Amit's path begins with grace and sacrifice, which eventually turns into smug self-victimisation.

'Kabhi Kabhie' opens in Kashmir, where Amit, a poet, and Pooja (Rakhee), an admirer of his verses, meet. He describes her captivating hazel eyes as capable of forming a connection with whatever they behold. Their love story is thwarted when Pooja agrees to marry a man of her parents' choice. Amit, like the gentleman he is expected to be, lets her go. She urges him to continue writing for her sake. He advises they part completely. She embraces her new life. He gives up poetry. Years later, they meet again at different stages of their lives, reflecting on their journeys.

The man-woman dynamic, shaped by past and present, is unpacked through two marriages: Pooja and Vijay's (Shashi Kapoor), and Amit and Anjali's (Waheeda Rehman). Both Pooja and Amit have married other people due to societal compulsions, yet how they connect with their respective spouses is a wonderful exploration of gendered perspectives and the idea of moving on. Pooja and Vijay's domestic bliss is starkly opposed to Amit and Anjali's outwardly functional but emotionally frigid marriage.

All three men — Amit, Vijay and Vijay's son Vicky (Rishi Kapoor) — represent a version of the 'good man', but also hold certain prejudices against women. Amit's abandonment of a creative life and the shrinking of his identity to that of a businessman and family man isn't heroic. His silent suffering becomes a passive-aggressive reminder to Anjali, who, despite her attempts at companionship, is denied emotional reciprocity.

In contrast, Vijay is doting and attentive. He shares a healthy rapport with both Pooja and Vicky, who is well brought up. And yet there are moments where both father and son flippantly endorse unjust stereotypes about women. Each time it's up to Pooja to raise objections to these notions.

The conflict of the past and present is the film's central theme. The men speak of their pasts. They reminisce, romanticise, and even build their identities around it. But a woman's past remains unacknowledged, as though she cannot have one. When buried histories resurface for Pooja and Anjali, the reactions are revelatory. Amit reacts most cruelly and hypocritically about Anjali's premarital child as a moral transgression even though he is evasive about his own past. For all his artistic sensibilities and creative depth, he cannot let go of the past — neither his nor his wife's. This is where veteran screenwriter Sagar Sarhadi's writing shines. In Amit, he creates a complex character whose tragedy doesn't justify his hypocrisy. Hurting doesn't give a free pass to hurt others, as we see in Pooja and Anjali, who are graceful and pragmatic in accepting their reality and moving on.

And what about Vijay? Sarhadi sets this up as the film's moment of truth. When Vijay confesses that he knows about Pooja and Amit's past relationship, he is momentarily insecure. But he soon recognises and is even embarrassed by the pettiness of his reaction — typical of a man towards a woman he has long loved. He laughs at the fragility of the male ego and settles the discussion once and for all. And with this single turn of events, 'Kabhi Kabhie' conjures a different kind of a leading man: one who may have his prejudices but is brave enough to introspect them. The kind lost in today's wave of I-care-a-damn alpha males.

(The author is a freelance journalist who writes about vintage Hindi cinema)

Amitabh Bachchan and Rakhee in the 'Kabhi Kabhie' title track.

MOVIE REVIEWS

An unlikely friendship in deep space

TAHER AHMED

★★★★½

Project Hail Mary
English (Theatres)
Director: Phil Lord, Christopher Miller
Cast: Ryan Gosling, Sandra Hüller, James Ortiz

'Project Hail Mary' can be viewed as that rare star which visits once every few decades. But unlike the ones that burn bright and vanish, this one sticks around, quietly glowing long after.

The movie revolves around the possibility of the sun being eaten by a space microorganism, the 'astrophage'. Ryan Gosling stars as Ryland Grace, a schoolteacher who unwittingly finds himself as the foremost expert on a global task force to save Earth from an impending ice age.

Finding himself waking up from a coma on a spaceship, Grace struggles to figure out who he is and what he is doing light years away from Earth. As he begins to understand what's happening, he finds himself at the centre of the galaxy, attempting to decipher why the astrophage is unable to prey on 'Tau Ceti', a star in its own right.

Ryan Gosling stars as Ryland Grace in this sci-fi.

Alone in space, he comes across an unlikely friend, Rocky, who is also on a similar mission to protect his planet. Together, they form an out-of-this-world team, using each other's abilities to come up with a plan to stop the astrophage from destroying their worlds.

While the first half can feel slow, the story picks up in the second half, with Rocky emerging as the star of this space odyssey. In terms of visuals, the movie does a decent job.

Ultimately, 'Project Hail Mary' is a charming story of underdogs who become unlikely heroes, proving that even in the vastness of space, some stories still land perfectly. This one's a stellar watch.

Supercop serves justice loud and on loop

ANGEL RANI

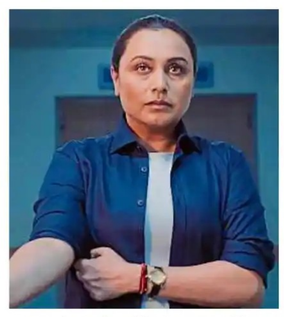
By the third instalment of 'Mardaani', Rani Mukerji isn't just a supercop. She is practically the Avengers, the Terminator and Sherlock Holmes rolled into one.

The gang-busting, patriarchy-smashing policewoman dominates every frame, leading her team with military precision into the lairs of every mafia under the sun. She is the kind who could solve a Rubik's Cube blindfolded while chasing down a crime lord. Her wit never wavers, and her reflexes are faster than light.

So what is ACP Shivani Shivaji Roy up to this time? Saving women, of course. Once again, the track revolves around child trafficking, with a begging mafia led by 'Amma' (Mallika Prasad) driving Rani's over-the-top kick-ass show.

A diplomat's daughter is kidnapped, and before the perpetrators can even make the ransom call, our tough-nut cop has almost cracked the case, armed with nothing but her brain cells. Told you, she is pure Sherlock.

We soon learn that similar cases have been occurring across the country, with pre-pubescent girls as the sole victims. Rani's new ally in this round of crime-demolition is a rookie cop (Janki Bodiwala), who seems both overwhelmed and bewildered by her latest assignment. The duo is later joined by a do-gooder (Prajesh Kashyap), who runs an NGO for rescued street children.



Rani Mukerji plays police officer Shivani Shivaji Roy.

★★½☆☆

Mardaani 3
Hindi (Netflix)
Director: Abhiraj Minawala
Cast: Rani Mukerji, Janki Bodiwala, Mallika Prasad, Prajesh Kashyap

Throw in a virus, some deadly lab experiments and a few pharma sharks, and 'Mardaani 3' serves up ample targets for Rani to punch, kick, shoot and slam — before topping it all off with the mandatory speech about women being perpetual victims, and her role as their saviour in what looks like a never-ending franchise.

The first two instalments had some spark, but this one feels like a hurriedly cobbled-together platter of yesterday's leftovers.

This video game-like thriller never levels up

NIKHIL WAIKER

★½☆☆☆

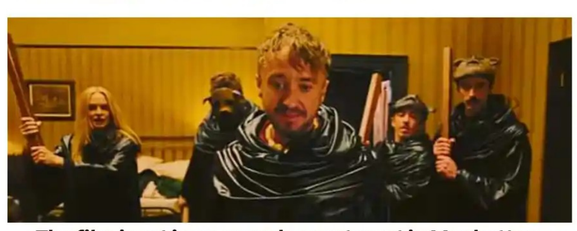
They Will Kill You
English (Theatres)
Director: Kirill Sokolov
Cast: Zazie Beetz, Myha'la, Paterson Joseph

Storytelling today resonates across multiple forms of popular entertainment. A case in point is immersive storytelling inspired by video games, where narratives unfold from a first-person POV and the environment evolves alongside the protagonist's journey. At the climax, the central conflict resolves cinematically, bringing the protagonist's perilous journey to an end.

'They Will Kill You', Kirill Sokolov's third comedy thriller in the past decade, appears to unfold on similar lines. Set in The Virgil, a Manhattan apartment building where wealthy residents have made a literal deal with the devil, the film follows an unsuspecting Asia Reaves (Zazie Beetz). She checks in at a hotel in the complex as a live-in maid, hoping to reconnect with her sister Maira (Myha'la). On her first night, Asia uncovers a plot against her life when cultists attack her. From there, the film's trajectory becomes strikingly obvious, with one deus ex machina after another saving her, until Maira ultimately sacrifices herself.

The fight sequences, seemingly inspired by 'Kill Bill' and 'Ready or Not', grow increasingly inconsistent with each scene. The film also draws heavily on contemporary conspiracy theories and elite superstition narratives that have gained traction online, particularly following the release of the Epstein files.

Although the film clearly signals its comedic intent, the low stakes surrounding the protagonist and the predetermined fate of the cultists make it an underwhelming watch. Mainstream films often bank on formula, and the commercial nature of filmmaking is evident here. But when the protagonist is effectively invincible, conflict — crucial for lending depth to a character — becomes redundant.



The film is set in an upscale apartment in Manhattan.

The magic pen

Ashrafi Antia writes about a young girl's journey to creative confidence

Tapping her pen against the table, Asha sighed despondently. She was stuck on her creative writing assignment. "Perhaps your Maasi, who is an author and poet, can give you some tips," her mother suggested.

So Asha went to her Maasi and told her she needed help to write an essay or poem titled 'My Favourite Place'.

"Hmm," said Maasi. "Which is your favourite place?"

"Our garden," replied Asha, smiling.

"Visualise it. What do you see? What do you like about it?" asked Maasi.

"The colourful flowers and shady trees," replied Asha promptly.

"Now let's play a game. I'll give you a word, and you have to find words that rhyme with it. Let's start with 'flower'," said Maasi.

"Umm... hour, power and shower," replied Asha.

"Now, make a two-line rhyme with 'flowers'," Maasi urged.

"*In the early morning hours, I stared at the garden flowers*," Asha replied.

"Good," encouraged Maasi. "Now think of a colour and find rhyming words for it."

"Red: bed, head, shed," Asha chimed.

"How about trees?" asked Maasi. "Breeze... ease," Asha responded.

"Now make a rhyme with trees," said Maasi.

Asha thought and said, "*The fruit trees Swayed in the breeze*."

"What's your favourite flower?" Maasi asked.

"Rose, which rhymes with nose," Asha quipped chirpily.

"*The scent of the rose, tickled my nose,*" she rhymed, more confidently now.

"How does the garden make you feel?" Maasi enquired.

"I have to say, it brightened my day," replied Asha, smiling.

"There, you've got the hang of it. Now put all your thoughts and ideas together in sequence, and your poem will fall into place," advised Maasi.

So Asha wrote: *In the early morning hours,*
I stared at the garden flowers.
The fruit trees
Swayed in the breeze.
The scent of the rose
Tickled my nose.
I saw marigolds growing neatly in their bed,
In varying shades of yellow, orange and red.
I truly have to say,
They brightened my day!

"Voila!" Maasi exclaimed. "But what if you're not there to help?" Asha whispered diffidently.

"Well then, I'll give you my magic pen. It was given to me by my mother, the original storyteller in our family. When I write with it, the ideas just flow along with the ink onto paper. Here, it's yours now. But be warned, if you don't make the effort or put in the hard work, the magic pen won't work," declared Maasi.

Asha stared at the beautiful bottle-green fountain pen with a gold cap and nib in awe.

"Let's try a different exercise now. Choose a picture from this old National Geographic magazine and describe it. Remember to use descriptive adjectives and phrases so that the reader can visualise what you're describing. When you're done, read what you've written to me. I shall close my eyes and see it in my mind's eye through your words. Then, show me the picture, and if it's very similar to what I imagined, you'll have succeeded in painting the picture in my mind," instructed Maasi.

Asha chose a picture of a caravan of camels walking across the desert, framed in the light of the setting sun. She thought about it and touched the magic pen to paper. The words flowed out of her, and the pen flew furiously, her thoughts spilling onto the sheet of paper. When she was satisfied, she read it out.

"*The caravan of tired camels trudged through the desert's stark terrain, broken only by the undulating sand dunes. Their soft, padded feet sank into the sand, but their footprints were soon swept over by the shifting sands. The orange orb of the setting sun brought a little relief from the scorching heat, as evening edged in with a faint breeze. The white robes of the old Bedouin leading the camels flapped gently as he wiped a bead of sweat trickling down his forehead with the back of his wrinkled hand. The bells on the camels' necks tinkled, breaking the silence of the desert sands. Soon they would rest for the night and recoup.*"

"Brilliant," said Maasi. "I could see it all through your description. Show me the picture now. Full marks for your description," she cheered, clapping in delight. "See, creative writing is not so difficult after all, and you're really good at it too."

"Thanks, Maasi. You made it really fun. Now I know I can do it," beamed Asha.

Asha approached her assignments with a newfound zest and confidence. With the magic pen in her hand, she was never at a loss for words. She always took her magic pen to her exams. If she found she was stuck, she twirled her pen between her fingers, closed her eyes and focused on what she had read, and voila, she would recall the page in her mind and the answer would come to her. Her grades started improving too. Her English teacher was so impressed with her essays and assignments that she was made the editor of the school magazine.

When people praised her penmanship, Asha smiled, thinking of her magic pen, the secret to her success. Many years later, she thanked her Maasi, "Your magic pen worked wonders and truly helped me."

Maasi confided, "The magic was within; the pen just helped bring it out. It was only a crutch to boost your confidence. I always believed in you, but the pen helped you believe in yourself. When you see someone else struggling, pass the magic pen on to them and watch it work its magic."

2 DIY craft using cardboard box

... and other stationery items

Robot costume

Materials needed

- 1 large cardboard box
- Smaller cardboard pieces
- Scissors or cutter (adult supervision needed)
- Glue or tape
- Paints or sketch pens
- Colour paper

Method

- Take a large cardboard box and close the bottom flaps securely with tape. It should be big enough to fit over the child's head/torso.
- Cut two round holes in the front panel for eyes. You can also cut a small opening for the mouth if needed.
- Cut holes on the sides so the child can put their arms out comfortably.
- To decorate the robot face, draw buttons, dials, and panels using sketch pens or paint.
- Add paper or cardboard shapes, foil, or bottle caps for a 3D effect, to depict gears, antennas, or control panels. You can even attach pipe cleaners as antennas.
- Place the box over the child's head and adjust for comfort.

Toy bus

Materials needed

- 1 rectangular cardboard box/ shoebox
- 4 bottle caps or cardboard circles
- Coloured paper or paints
- Black sketch pen/marker
- Glue or tape
- Scissors or cutter (adult supervision needed)

Method

- To shape the bus, take a rectangular box and keep the top open.
- Draw rectangles along the sides and carefully cut them out to create windows.
- Paint the box in bright colours like yellow or red. Use a marker to draw doors, outlines, and fun designs.
- Stick bottle caps or cardboard circles to the bottom sides to make wheels.
- Draw headlights, a windshield, and even a number plate. You can also paste paper strips inside as "seats".
- Place small toys or make paper characters and seat them inside as passengers.

'You give cool shade...'

Open Sesame readers write letters to their favourite tree

Dear mango tree,

My favourite tree is the mango tree. It gives us sweet, ripe mangoes. It bears fruit only in summer.

I want to know why mango trees give mangoes only in the summer season. Mango is the king of fruits. It gives cool shade and also gives its mangoes to birds and animals. Birds sit on mango trees to rest or make nests to lay eggs. We hide behind the mango tree when we are playing hide and seek.

We make many dishes using mangoes, both ripe and raw ones, such as raw mango rice, mango chutney, mango juice, aamras, and mango ice cream.

I love the mango tree.

TANUSHRI ARAGINASHETTI, 13
Badami, Karnataka

Dear rose apple tree,

Hello there! I'm really glad to have a conversation with you, and I would really love to tell you that, out of all the trees in our garden, you are my favourite.

I have a barrage of questions to ask you, but I'm going to rapid-fire a few important ones that I've been dying to know since you were planted here. Why are rose apples so juicy? Why do you bear fruit only during the summer and not in other seasons? Moreover, why are your fruits always in bunches and not separate like mangoes? And why do your leaves turn reddish-purple before they bear fruit?

Also, I love the chaat that my dad makes with the rose apples and the delicious sharbat that my mom makes every summer Sunday, which I guzzle up with ecstasy.

Lastly, I would like to end our conversation, by telling you that I promise to take care of you so that you stay with us forever, and I will be able to enjoy all the scrumptious fruits throughout the summers.

ARCHISHA KAVATHEKAR, 12
Dharwad, Karnataka

Hi my kani konna (golden shower tree),

I planted you as a seed when I was as young as 3 years old. Perhaps my mother found a way to engage me and avoid my tantrums while she fed me lunch. I used to water you every day whenever I was in my native place. When I came back during each vacation, I would be excited to see how much you had grown.

I have always loved the species you belong to, engulfed in yellow flowers only during the summer. During other seasons, you make me eagerly await the blooming season.

You surprised me when you first adorned yourself with flowers last year. You have always been the companion I grew up with, and I cherish every stage of your growth, from the first leaf to the sapling, and now a fully grown tree capable enough to spread happiness with your "yellow smile".

NIKETHA RAJESH IYER, 12
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Dear coconut tree,

I am writing this letter to tell you how much I admire you. You stand tall and graceful against the blue sky, serving as a pillar of beauty in our landscape.

Thank you for your incredible generosity — for providing sweet fruits and refreshing drinks on hot days.

You hold many memories of my life. You are like my best friend who doesn't talk but listens to me every time I speak to you. You truly are a 'tree of life', holding nothing back and giving everything you have to the earth.

Thank you for being my favourite tree.

With gratitude,

VANSHIKA R BALAGALI, 12
Belagavi, Karnataka

This Week:

March matters

Open Sesame Quiz

Take the fun Open Sesame quiz, and stand a chance to win gift vouchers worth Rs 500. Open to children below 16 years.

Q1 Born on March 28, 1926, Pahlan Ratanji (Polly) Umrigar scored the first double century by an Indian in Test cricket, in Hyderabad, in 1955. Which country's team was he batting against?

Q2 "The African People are capable of managing their own affairs and Ghana our beloved country is free forever." Who made this proclamation of independence, on March 6, 1957?

Q3 At the 98th Academy Awards ceremony, on March 15, 2026, which celebrity presented the award for Best International Feature Film, along with Spanish actor, Javier Ángel Encinas Bardem?

Scan the QR code
Or visit bit.ly/DHopensesame to participate in the quiz.

Q4 **Rhyme Time:** Two clues to which the answers rhyme with each other.
Clue A: Born on March 8, 1859, Kenneth Grahame wrote 'The Wind in the __'.
Clue B: Great waves.

Q5 **Clue Cluster:** Who was the intended target of the assassination plot that failed on March 13, 1943?
Use these clues.
a) Linz
b) Chancellor
c) Germany
d) Eva

WINNERS' NAMES: Yashika (15), Bengaluru; Soundarya (12), Bidar; Kashvi K (8), Bengaluru.
ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: A1) Virgil, A2) Shahnameh, A3) The Gift Outright, A4) Tales/Wales, A5) Mozart.

POETS IN THE MAKING

Want to see your poetry in print?

Send in poems on the topic 'My favourite place' to *Open Sesame*. You may be featured in an upcoming edition. Mail your work — not more than 12 lines — to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Entries close on April 2. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph.

LET'S DEBATE!

Want to take part in the upcoming *Open Sesame* debate? Share your thoughts in a crisp 200-word essay on the topic 'Should kids choose their own bedtime?' Mail your works to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Entries close on April 16. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, school, and city. And send us a recent photograph.

Word of the Week

vestige

(noun)
— a trace or reminder of something that has disappeared or is disappearing

Usage:
— The crumbling wall was the last vestige of a once-thriving fort.
— There wasn't a vestige of doubt in her mind.

ART CORNER

Love painting?

Want to showcase your flair for colours? Send your paintings on the theme 'Amazing April' to *Open Sesame* and stand a chance to get featured in an upcoming edition. Mail photographs of your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph of yourself. Entries close on April 9.

Kabul, 2019.
A half-destroyed building reflects the decades of war the country has faced.

Reporting from the frontlines

War correspondent Kanika Gupta was in Afghanistan when it fell to the Taliban after 20 years of the US occupation. She recounts the days she spent covering the conflict in Kabul and Kandahar

The author (in black) and others were evacuated out of Kabul on August 17, 2021 on a military flight.
ALL PICS PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR

On the morning of August 15, 2021, I sat inside the now-defunct Ministry of Women's Affairs in Kabul, Afghanistan. I was interviewing the executive director, Latifa Majidi, about a $100 million World Bank project meant to expand its ongoing work in empowering women to become self-sustaining by teaching them skills like sewing and handicrafts.

Latifa spoke about her decades-long work with women at the grassroots level and her efforts to challenge cultural norms that forbade them from working outside their homes. They were, at that point, expanding into different provinces across Afghanistan.

By that day, the Taliban had already secured control of 26 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, and rumours were thick that they were inching dangerously close to the capital. Kabul, usually vibrant at midday, was unusually quiet. The streets were empty, and the shops across from Latifa's office were shuttered.

I interviewed the women on her team and they spoke with conviction about their plans to take the project to every village and district in Afghanistan, even as they admitted to praying every night that the Taliban would not take over their country. They showed remarkable faith in their government to protect them and preserve the gains of the past two decades. Some had personally experienced the Taliban's brutal and regressive rule during their first regime between 1995 and 2001.

As they discussed their plans for the days ahead, the corridor outside began to reverberate with panic. People were running and shouting when someone burst into the room and told Latifa: the Taliban were in the capital. I sat there, stunned, as the women hugged each other and cried. Within hours, news broke that president Ashraf Ghani had fled and that the country had officially fallen to the Taliban.

From Kashmir to Afghanistan

I travelled to Kashmir in the spring of 2017 when it was only just beginning to emerge from months of shutdowns and restrictions following the killing of Burhan Wani the previous year. Staying with a local host, I encountered a version of Kashmir that did not match what I heard back home in Delhi. I wrote about that gap in my blogs and was approached by a local travel publication to write for them. That subtle pivot made me realise I could do more of it and I decided to break into journalism after working a corporate job unsatisfactorily for many years.

By 2019, my travel community had stretched across countries, and I had friends in places I had never imagined going to. One of them was based in Kabul. He encouraged me and helped me navigate the visa process.

The night before my flight, in August 2019, stretched endlessly. I couldn't sleep; my stomach turned at the thought of getting on that plane. The next morning, I put on a brave face as I booked a cab to the airport, my father's warnings hanging over me. The flight from Delhi to Kabul took just over two hours, but it felt longer. As we began our descent, the women in the cabin started covering their heads, and I followed suit.

From above Kabul, I could see military aircraft lining the tarmac. Immigration was quick. I spotted my friend waiting across the parking lot and instinctively moved to hug him. He stopped me midway. "We can't do this here," he said. I stepped back, suddenly aware of where I was.

I spent 10 days in Afghanistan. It was not a place without risk or violence, but it was also a lot more than that.

I was especially intrigued to find that as an Indian, I received a warm welcome from Afghans, many of whom were well versed in Indian cinema and music. Markets often played '90s Bollywood songs.

Afghans viewed India through the prism of their fraught relationship with Pakistan. Decades of tension along the Durand Line, a 2,600 km border drawn by the British in 1893 that split Pashtun communities across both sides, continues to be contested by Afghanistan which has never formally recognised it as an international boundary. This, coupled with allegations of Pakistani support for the Taliban, had shaped public perception.

The 2019 election year in Afghanistan was exceptionally bloody, shaped by an organised campaign of violence by the Taliban, aimed at disrupting the democratic process. It unfolded against the backdrop of collapsing peace talks between the Taliban and the United States. Mounting civilian casualties was daily news, and the political climate was growing fragile.

I began to understand the contours of the country and knew I would have to return, to look more closely.

Return of the Taliban

In March 2021, I was back in Kabul, this time with a very different purpose.

I shared an apartment with a Polish journalist who helped me navigate the country's dense bureaucracy and secure the permits I needed to work full-time. Through her, I also connected with organisations that supported freelancers, which meant I could access flak jackets and helmets and move beyond tentative reporting into the frontlines. I began travelling across provinces, trying to keep pace with how quickly the situation was changing, and learning on the go. It was after all my first active war zone.

World Food Programme's aid relief efforts in Herat, Afghanistan in March 2022.

In his first term, Donald Trump signed what was described as a "peace deal" with the Taliban in Doha in February 2020. By the time I arrived, Joe Biden had taken office and, in April, announced that the United States would withdraw all remaining troops, bringing an end to its 20-year war. The impact was immediate. The Taliban advanced rapidly, taking province after province.

Around this time, I visited Bagram Airbase, once the largest US military installation in the country, which American forces had vacated overnight. Walking through it, it felt as though the war had ended almost abruptly, and this place had simply been left behind.

The scale of conflict across the country was so enormous that internal displacement surged. I travelled to Kandahar, where families from neighbouring provinces had taken shelter in makeshift camps inside schools and public buildings. It had been just a month since Reuters' Danish Siddiqui, a Pulitzer-winning photojournalist from India, was killed near Spin Boldak. I decided to keep a low profile and used my personal contacts to stay with a local family.

They welcomed me with a warmth that felt dissonant against the tension outside. We spent the evening in the courtyard as power cuts and signal blackouts set in after dusk. To beat the summer heat and power cuts, the family slept on the terrace and laid out a bed for me as well.

That night, the sound of shelling began. It was distant at first, then close enough to make sleep impossible. I lay awake as the family slept through it, as though it were routine — for them, it was. Listening closely and unable to sleep, I tried to measure distance through sound, wondering if there might be an air strike. I barely slept that night, and by morning, I decided to leave Kandahar.

At the airport, I learned that all flights had been cancelled. Taliban's rockets had targeted the runway and no one could say when flights would resume. I sat in the waiting area for hours, stranded and increasingly aware of how exposed I was. I had chosen not to carry my passport as I wanted to avoid drawing attention to my identity. Without documentation and with no clear reason to remain at the airport, I began to draw suspicion.

The airport director who had studied in India noticed the commotion and stepped in to reassure me of my safety and arranged for me to leave the next day. I spent another night there before boarding a flight back to Kabul. Two days later, Kandahar fell. Soon after, Kabul fell too.

During this time, through the stress and ambiguity, the newsrooms were churning reports by the hour. I had one deadline after another. Feeding that manic news cycle from the ground became almost mechanical. Report by day, file at night. I could feel the emotional and physical toll of those days in my loss of appetite and the way I jolted awake at night with every loud bang.

I left Afghanistan on a military aircraft on August 17, 2021, two days after Kabul fell, the tarmac still scattered with the belongings of those who had tried to leave. A few months later, I returned.

By January 2022, Afghanistan had become the Islamic Emirate. I could recognise the sound of the streets, the smell of local food, and the regular bustling of the markets, but its social fabric was visibly changed — there were no women. In March that year, they shut down schools for older girls, which remain closed to this day, and over time, women disappeared almost entirely from all workplaces.

I often thought back to a conversation in Kandahar, when my host Laila Jan had described what life under the Taliban had once been like. These restrictions no longer felt like a distant reality, but a lived reality of millions of women who felt trapped inside the world's largest open-air prison.

I reported extensively on the systematic erosion of women's rights and the decrees that pushed them out of public life and into near invisibility in their own country. Between 2021 and 2026, the Taliban issued more than 70 such directives, restricting women's rights and civil liberties, in what many Afghans in exile and human rights defenders have described as gender apartheid. This reporting did not sit well with the Taliban, and since 2022, they have denied me permission to return and continue my work.

Four years on, I continue to report on Afghanistan from outside, and on other conflicts, including Lebanon. Today, Afghanistan remains in the grip of a deep humanitarian crisis, with more than half its population dependent on aid. Tensions along its borders continue to add to the strain. The wider regional fallout from US-Israel tensions with Iran has further tightened the pressure.

Working in conflict zones

Working as a freelance journalist in such environments brings its own challenges. When risk became greater, safety became more expensive. Protective gear, local fixers, transport, and secure accommodation all come at a cost that rises with risk. I often relied on my editors to help me navigate the complexities.

There is also the question of independence. Accepting logistical support from state or non-state actors can compromise how and what you report, but refusing it can limit access or increase vulnerability. It is a balance that one has to constantly work with, often in real time.

Sonia Sarkar, a Delhi-based journalist, was reporting from a conflict zone in Chhattisgarh in 2009. She was in Maoist-dominated Bastar and was set to travel from Sukma to Dantewada to meet a cop. Maoists had called a bandh and the cop insisted on sending a car to pick her up. "My father advised me not to travel in any official vehicle as there was always a risk of collateral damage if Maoists targeted the police vehicle. That advice didn't come from any newsroom. It came from my father and I have followed it ever since," she recalls, adding that in Indian newsrooms, journalists are often left to negotiate on the field using their own understanding of the situation with little to no structured training on conflict reporting.

Working in a conflict zone is also about constantly negotiating access, trust and truth. Information can be contradictory or deliberately withheld, and verifying even basic facts can become a challenge when movement is restricted and communication networks are unreliable or shut down entirely. For freelance journalists without institutional backing, these challenges are further compounded.

Mehk Chakraborty, an independent journalist and researcher who writes on migration, conflict and human rights, highlights these challenges as she works amid the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. "There's no guarantee that stories reported under the constant threat of bombs are even going to find a home, and when they do, it is often for a compensation well under a decent wage," says Mehk, who is based between Beirut and the EU. Anagha Subhash Nair, a journalist based in Damascus, Syria, points out the emotional challenges of covering war. "It's an intense environment where you're in very close proximity to death and destruction. Furthermore, you sometimes have interviewees asking you 'who's going to read this?' or placing high expectations that your article is going to directly impact their life for the better," says Anagha, who has been covering life in post-conflict Syria.

When people trust you with their stories, you listen to accounts of loss, violence, and survival, often from those who take personal risks to speak. That responsibility is enormous, and it brings with it the pressure to do justice to those stories without becoming an advocate for one side or losing sight of the larger context.

Like this story?
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MUSICANA

Reimagining ragas on the piano

Anirudh Varma tells Charumathi Supraja how his collective is bridging classical and contemporary music

The music of the Anirudh Varma Collective has a wholesome feel. You can expect the stage to be filled with artistes playing both Indian and Western instruments, while singers explore a range of ragas alongside contemporary styles. Notes from the piano, often emanating from the rear of the stage, hold the ensemble's music together. The collective's founder, Anirudh Varma, a New Delhi-based pianist and composer, ensures that the music remains easy on the audience's ears, however complex the compositions may be.

Varma reflected on the group's journey after a performance at The Sacred Amritsar music festival in Punjab last month. Around 2017, he began contacting musicians he had met during his days at Delhi University, to work on a collaborative project for his post-graduation thesis. Sixty-five of them came together, resulting in the album 'Perspectives' within a year. The collective that formed has since collaborated with over 200 artistes globally, though its core group comprises 12 musicians.

While 'Perspectives' had arrangements that were mostly Varma's, their second album, 'Homecoming', saw more musicians bringing in their own pieces. The first album reflects the collective's early phase of experimentation, with most tracks delving into ragas like shudh kalyan and maru bihag. In contrast, the storytelling in the latter comes through in a fuller voice, with the title track conveying a sense of finding one's place.

'Sabr', their latest release, is rooted in a more metaphysical landscape. The 12-track album conveys yearning and a sense of searching. Compositions like 'Mausam' and 'Kuchh doori' linger in the listener's mind.

Varma's love for music came from his family. "We would go to my grandparents' home in Allahabad every summer. My grandfather, S N Varma, a senior lawyer at the Allahabad High Court, was also a musician, and he would make the entire family sing," he recalls.

One summer, while he was "playing around" with his grandfather's harmonium, his family noticed that he could pick up any tune without any training. Playing by ear was his first step towards music. His parents enrolled him in keyboard classes, but he eventually shifted to the piano.

The group performed at The Sacred Amritsar music festival in Punjab last month. PIC: TEAMWORK ARTS

Over time, the piano became his pathway to exploring Indian classical music. By the time he was in college, this reimagining of ragas on the piano had become his musical language. He is personally drawn to ragas like yaman, tilak kamod, and bhimpalasi though he believes "each raga tells us a unique story."

As a collective, he says their "intent is always to have the arrangements adapt around the classical composition, not the other way around". And he finds it "encouraging that listeners unfamiliar with classical music feel a sense of curiosity and excitement" when they listen to the collective's work.

Shine wins main event

KOLKATA RESULTS

Vijay Singh-trained Shine, ridden by Suraj Narredu, won the BTC Cup, the main event of the races held on Friday.

1. The Noble View Handicap - 1600M: Strong Talons (R Vaibhav) 1; No Worry (Antony Raj) 2; Lineupandcollect (Darshan N) 3; Soul Aquarian (MS Deora) 4; WB: 6-1/4, 1-1/2, Dht. T: 1:38.52; TB: V Ajith Kumar; Fav: No Worry.

2. The Nikita Handicap - 1600M: Xanthe (P Trevor) 1; Booster Shot (Nikhil Naidu) 2; Togo (V Bunde) 3; Star Studded (Suraj Narredu) 4; WB: 4, 2-3/4, 5. T: 1:37.14. TB: SS Attaollahi; Fav: Star Studded.

3. The Surfside Handicap - 1400M: Queen Anula (R Vaibhav) 1; Keitaro (Antony Raj) 2; Upper Street (P Trevor) 3; Adeya (Bhati) 4; WB: 7-1/2, 1/2, 2. T: 1:25.17. TB: V Ajith Kumar; Fav: Upper Street.

4. Oakmead Handicap (Div I) - 1400M: Cigar Galaxy (P Trevor) 1; Jimmy Bee (Darshan N) 2; Most And More (AA Vikrant) 3; Banduk Wali (Vinod Shinde) 4; WB: 2-1/4, 3/4, 1. T: 1:25.08; TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Cigar Galaxy.

5. Oakmead Handicap (Div II) - 1400M: Sea Eagle (Antony Raj) 1; Oh My Darling (Varun) 2; Three Little Words (Vinod Shinde) 3; Dubai Ruler (Hasib Alam) 4; WB: Nk, Lnk, 2. T: 1:26.91. TB: Neil Darashah; Fav: Impressive Annie.

6. Bangalore Turf Club Cup - 1200M: Shine (Suraj Narredu) 1; Victoria Cross (V Bunde) 2; Abhicandra (P Trevor) 3; Ruling Star (Darshan N) 4; WB: 2, Nk, 5-1/2. T: 1:11.15. TB: Vijay Singh; Fav: Shine.

7. The Antequera Handicap - 1200M: Mi Arion (Antony Raj) 1; Memphis (MS Deora) 2; Priceless Prince (Suraj Narredu) 3; Horus The Great (Hasib Alam) 4; WB: 2-1/2, Shd, Shd; T: 1:12.96. TB: Rutherford; Fav: Mi Arion.

Bengaluru dividends

I race: Rs 52 w; 22, 13 p; Fc: Rs 164; Q: Rs 47; Shp: Rs 31; Thp: Rs 50; Tri: Rs 1220 & 743; Exp: Rs 2761 & 1446.

II race: Rs 24 w; 15, 39 p; Fc: Rs 180; Q: Rs 81; Shp: Rs 57; Thp: Rs 31; Tri: Rs 530 & 324; Exp: Rs 963 & 180.

III race: Rs 80 w; 15, 16, 13 p; Fc: Rs 1528: Q: Rs 907; Shp: Rs 47; Thp: Rs 69; Tri: Rs 5372 & 863; Exp: Rs 47,469 & 20,344.

IV race: Rs 24 w; 11, 16, 35 p; Fc: Rs 257; Q: Rs 156; Shp: Rs 57; Thp: Rs 116; Tri: Rs 3173 & 1223; Exp: Rs 35,078 & 5011.

V race: Rs 29 w; 26, 14, 33 p; Fc: Rs 132; Q: Rs 78; Shp: Rs 36; Thp: Rs 74; Tri: Rs 1094 & 859; Exp: Rs 11,325 & 2080.

VI race: Rs 16 w: 11, 16, 11 p; Fc: Rs 32; Q: Rs 36; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 38; Tri: Rs 33 & 25; Exp: Rs 280 & 157.

VII race: Rs 27 w; 12, 24, 11 P; Fc: Rs 208; Q: Rs 203; Shp: Rs 54; Thp: Rs 46; Tri: Rs 369 & 125; Exp: Rs 2159 & 2247.

Jackpot: Rs 28,075 & 2831. **I treble:** Rs 16,131. **II treble:** Rs 204.

Walking Thunder for Donegal Plate

HYDERABAD SELECTIONS

Walking Thunder, from the stables of LVR Deshmukh and to ridden by P Trevor, is fancied to win the Donegal Plate, the feature event of the races on Saturday. The first race starts at 3 pm.

1. The Krishna Plate - 1100M: Dhanadeepa 1, Golden Unicorn 2, Battle On 3.

2. The Crack Regiment Plate - 1200M: Arthisha 1, Catch The Worm 2, Red Hot Punch 3.

3. Hidden Bloom Plate - 1200M: Brilliant Lad 1, Tootsie Darling 2, Warwick 3.

4. The Wanaparthy - 1400M: Gold Touch 1, Toshiro 2, Fugo 3.

5. The Donegal Plate - 1200M: Walking Thunder 1, Timeless Vision 2, Star Of Opera 3.

6. The Nalgonda Plate - 1400M: La Fleuriere 1, La Quintal 2, Whistledown 3.

7. The Himayat Sagar Plate - 1400M: Wolf Creek 1, China Town 2, Catch Me If You Can 3.

Day's Best: Brilliant Lad. **Jackpot:** 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. **I treble:** 2, 3, 4. **II treble:** 5, 6, 7.

Ashwa Vedha for feature

DELHI SELECTIONS

S Nawad-trained Ashwa Vedha, to be ridden by Vivek G, will garner the maximum support in the Vijay Sprint Plate, the feature event of the races on Saturday. The first race starts at 2.15 pm.

1. Veer Gati Plate - 1000M: Scarlett Tempest 1. Helicopter 2.

2. Vijay Sprint Plate - 1400M: Ashwa Vedha 1, Eliminator 2, The Panther 3.

3. Tex Raftaar Plate - 1600M: Miss Berg 1, Heer 2, Dubai Falcon 3.

4. The Samrat Plate (Div I) - 1100M: Bellagio 1, Tequila 2, Time To Win 3.

5. The Samrat Plate (Div II) - 1100M: Rocket Rod 1, Lucky Lips 2, Golden Sun.

6. The Shaan-E-Race Plate - 1000M: Ticket 1, Trending Cruise 2, She's Beauty 3.

Day's Best: Rocket Rod. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. **Treble:** 4, 5, 6.

SCB squander lead for 3-3 draw

BENGALURU, DHNS: SC Bengaluru started their I-League campaign with a 3-3 draw against GMSC at the Cooperage Stadium in Mumbai on Friday.

SCB missed out on a chance to grab all three points as they squandered a 2-0 lead. Second-half goals by Aravindraj Rajan (74th minute) and Aashish Lalge (88th) took the points away from SCB, who took the lead through in Asif OM (22nd) and Devadath (33rd).

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

IPL: RCB vs SRH (**7:30 pm**). **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHostar**.

FOOTBALL

Friendlies: Scotland vs Japan (**10:30 pm**), USA vs Belgium (**1 am**). **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **SonyLIV**.

GOLF

Indian Open: Day 3 (**1:30 pm**). **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 2**.

MOTORSPORTS

F1: Japanese GP FP 3 & Qualifying (**8 am**). **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

MotoGP: US GP (**11 pm**). **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

CAG report raps DYES for irregular release of funds

Vigilant body notes guideline violation in Ekalavya awards

HITA PRAKASH
BENGAURU DHNS

From the irregular release of cash incentives to alleged misappropriation of funds and discrepancies in the payment of cash awards to sportspersons, the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) has flagged poor functioning in the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYES) in its latest report released on Thursday. In a detailed table covering cash awards, Ekalavya Awards, Karnataka Kreeda Ratna Award, Lifetime Achievement Award, Amrutha Kreeda Dattu Yojana, Karnataka Sahasra Kreeda Pratibha Yojana and the SC/ST Encouragement Fund incentive scheme, the CAG found irregular release of cash incentives amounting to Rs 4.54 crore between 2019 and 2024.

Of this, Rs 86.85 lakh disbursed by DYES to sportspersons was found to be in violation of government guidelines. The audit also noted discrepancies in the Ekalavya Awards, which included non-Olympic events listed under Olympic disciplines. Those named in this list include cricketers Veda Krishnamurthy, Mayank Agarwal (both 2019), and Karun Nair (2020); Prasanth Kumar Rai (kabaddi, 2020), Muneer Basha (kho kho, 2020) and Nitin and Sakshath (netball, 2020 and 2021 respectively).

Cricket was included as an Olympic sport only in 2023.

"DYES was required to recognise and promote sporting excellence through appropriate cash awards and honours. We observed irregular payment of cash incentives to sportspersons to the extent of Rs 4.54 crore under various awards and schemes," the CAG report said.

In response, DYES stated that the awards were shortlisted after inviting applications and were finalised by a committee chaired by the sports minister, followed by the issuance of a government order. The CAG dismissed this explanation as "not acceptable" and stated that the awards were granted without verifying achievements and included ineligible sportspersons.

Furthermore, the CAG reported suspected misappropriation of funds in cash awards and incentives for the period 2018–19 to 2023–24 amounting to Rs 93 lakh. This includes failed e-payments of Rs 44 lakh that were drawn through different bills and shown as credited to 62 beneficiary accounts by DYES.

"Scrutiny of the recipient IDs of these failed e-payment bills revealed that all 62 payments shown as transferred to beneficiary accounts were actually transferred to one of three account numbers belonging to an individual who was not a beneficiary. Thus, the amount pertaining to 62 different beneficiaries or agencies, which was credited to only three bank accounts, points to suspected fraudulent transactions to the extent of Rs 0.44 crore," the CAG said.

The report comes soon after *DH* highlighted that DYES credited Rs 15 lakh to a few athletes under the state government's 'Target Olympic Medal' scheme without announcing the final list of 60 Karnataka sportspersons selected for the project aimed at supporting them in the run-up to the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

CAG CALLS OUT DYES

- Irregular cash incentives to sportspersons amounting to Rs 4.54 cr under various awards and schemes
- Eklavya awards given to cricketers when the game wasn't yet part of Olympics, a violation of guidelines.
- Suspected misappropriation of Rs 93 lakh in cash awards & incentives between 2018–19 & 2023–24.

Manikanta L

Karnataka continue to dominate

RAIPUR, PTI: Karnataka extended their lead at the top of the medal tally with yet another dominant showing at the swimming pool in the first Khelo India Tribal Games here.

The strapping Manikanta L once again led the charge as the Karnataka swimmer added two gold and a silver to his individual tally.

Karnataka ended Day 3 with 13 gold, 5 silver and one bronze.

Karnataka's Meghanjali clinched her third gold medal of the Games with a 38.23s time in women's 50m Breaststroke with Anushka Bhagat finishing second with a time of 39.57s.

Manikanta continued to shuttle between races and the victory ceremonies as he began the day with gold medals in 50m Breaststroke and 100m Butterfly before it looked like the toll of the races got to him.

In the final race of the day, Manikanta's statemate Dhoonesh N pipped him to the finish line in 50m freestyle.

Dhoonesh, who had won the 200m freestyle gold on the opening day of the Games, stopped the clock at 25.75s while Manikanta only managed a time of 26.38s.

Odisha are second with six gold, two silver and nine bronze while Assam are third with two gold, four silver and two bronze medals.

FOOTBALL WC QUALIFIERS

Italy stay in the hunt

Wales, Ireland suffer penalty heartbreak; Slovakia go down to Kosovo

PARIS, AFP

Italy will face Bosnia and Herzegovina for a place at the FIFA World Cup after beating Northern Ireland 2-0 on Thursday, as Wales and the Republic of Ireland suffered agonising penalty shootout defeats in their qualifying play-off semifinals.

Sandro Tonali and Moise Kean struck second-half goals in Bergamo to keep four-time World Cup winners Italy on track to end a 12-year absence from the tournament.

Italy missed the last two editions in Russia and Qatar but Tonali's powerful drive and an excellent finish from Kean nudged Gennaro Gattuso's team a step closer to a return to international football's biggest stage.

"We had to work hard because it was not easy tonight," said Gattuso.

"We knew this game would be tough, all we can do now is try to recharge the batteries."

Italy will take on Bosnia in Zenica next Tuesday.

A late header from 40-year-old Edin Dzeko cancelled out Dan James' superb opener for Wales and forced extra time in Cardiff, where Bosnia scraped through 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

Viktor Gyokeres scored a hat-trick in Sweden's 3-1 win over Ukraine.

Arsenal striker Gyokeres netted his first goals of the qualifying campaign to lead Sweden to the brink of the finals, despite a dismal group stage in which they picked up just two points in six matches. Sweden got another chance as a result of their UEFA Nations League performances and Gyokeres turned in from close range early on against Ukraine, unable to play at home because of the war with Russia and instead having to move the tie to neutral ground in Valencia, Spain.

Sandro Tonali celebrates after scoring Italy's first goal in their 2-0 win over Northern Ireland on Thursday. REUTERS

Poland comeback

Sweden will play Poland in Stockholm for one of four remaining European tickets to the World Cup.

Robert Lewandowski helped Poland come from behind to scrape past Albania 2-1 after Arber Hoxha gave the visitors the lead in Warsaw.

Lewandowski headed in from a corner to bring Poland level with his 89th goal for his country before Piotr Zielinski grabbed the winner.

Czech Republic goalkeeper Matej Kovar saved two penalties in a shootout to steer his team past Ireland in Prague.

Ireland looked well placed for a first trip to the World Cup since 2002 as Troy Parrott's penalty and own goal by Kovar put them 2-0 ahead.

Kosovo are on the brink of a first appearance at any major tournament following a wild 4-3 win away to Slovakia.

Results: Italy: 2 (Tonali 56th, Kean 80th) bt Northern Ireland:0 ; Czechia: 2 (Schick 27th pen, Krejci 86th) drew with Ireland (Parrott 19th pen, Kovar 23rd own goal) Czechia win 4-3 on penalties; Denmark: 4 (Damsgaard 49th, Isaksen 58th, 59th, Norgaard 75th) bt North Macedonia: 0; Poland: 2 (Lewandowski 63rd, Zielinski 73rd) bt Albania: 1 (Hoxha 42nd); Slovakia: 3 (Valijent 6th, Haraslin 45th, Strelec 90th+4) lt to Kosovo: 4 (Hodza 21st, Asliani 47th, Muslija 60th, Hajrizi 72nd); Ukraine: 1 (Ponomarenko 90th) lt to Sweden: 3 (Gyokeres 6th, 51st, 73rd pen).

France beat Brazil 2-1

Kylian Mbappe moved to within one goal of equalling France's all-time scoring record with the opener in a 2-1 win over Brazil as two of the leading World Cup contenders faced off in a glamour friendly in the United States on Thursday, reports AFP from Foxborough.

Mbappe ran through to beat goalkeeper Ederson with a delightful chipped finish to give France the lead just after the half-hour mark at the Gillette Stadium near Boston.

K'taka runners key in India's qualification push

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Manikanta Hoblidhar, Daneshwari AT (sprinters), Vijaykumari GK and MR Poovamma (quartermilers) are all set to play crucial roles in India's push for qualifications in various events of the World Relay Championships later this year as the four Karnataka runners are competing for India at the first edition of the International Invitation Relay Competition, doubling up as the National Open Relay Competition, in Chandigarh on Friday.

All four runners were included in the 26-athlete India squad for the one-day meet — which also features Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan — as the Athletics Federation of India pushes for qualification in men's 4x100m, 4x400, women's 4x400, and mixed 4x100m for the World Relays (slated in Gaborone, Botswana on May 3-5).

India are already within the qualification zone for women's 4x100m (ranked 23rd in the world) and mixed 4x400 (ranked 22nd) but any improvement in their current best timing will strengthen their chances as only the top 24 will qualify per event for the May's showdown.

Friday's event is probably the last chance for India to qualify for the abovementioned events as April 5 has been set the deadline for qualification. The World Athletics will finalise the line-up on April 7.

Non-campers Vijaykumari and Poovamma have emerged as a crucial addition to the 400m relay squad as the Karnataka duo outpaced the Indian campers for silver and bronze respectively at the National 400m Open in Thiruvananthapuram last week.

Manikanta Hoblidhar is set to play a crucial role in India's bid for World Relays qualification in 4x100m relay events. RFYS

Both the quartermilers, along with gold medallist Vithya Ramraj, were requested to join the team a couple of days ago and joined the team's training session for baton exchange practice on Thursday evening.

India are chasing a mark of 3.34.18 seconds in women's 4x400m.

India's second-fastest 100m sprinter Manikanta, on the other hand, will join forces with national record holder Animesh Kujur, 60m NR holder Gurindervir Singh, Tamil Arasu among others as they chase a timing of 38.73 seconds or better to enter the top 24 list.

Manikanta may feature in the mixed 4x100m relay with state-mate Daneshwari with the aim to set a timing of 43.25 seconds or above.

Karnataka separately have named a 29-athlete squad for the Relay Nationals.

IN BRIEF

Sarvagnanagar post 13-1 win

▶ Immanuel Derrick S hammered a hat-trick while Praveen Amith, Yogith N and B Tharanath netted a brace each to power Sarvagnanagar to a 13-1 victory over Yeshwanthpur in the second edition of the Chief Minister's Cup at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Friday, reports DHNS.

Results: Group C: Hebbal: 5 (Mohammed Abrahim Ahamed 9th, Aswin Chajravarthy 19th, Vishal Villa 47th, Udit G 66th, Prithvi G 72nd) bt Rajaji Nagar: 2 (Monish B Kumar G 3rd, 71st).

Group D: Sarvagnanagar: 13 (Sunilkumar M 7th, Immanuel Derrick S 13th, 33rd, 61st, Praveen Amith 21st, 23rd, Narendra Prasad V 38th, Yogith N 42nd, 78th, B Tharanath 58th, 80th, Ajay A 84th, Satish 90+1st) bt Yeshwanthpur: 1 (Jeevan 86th).

Sabalenka, Sinner march on

MIAMI, AFP: World No. 1 and defending champion Aryna Sabalenka subdued second-ranked rival Elena Rybakina 6-4, 6-3 on Thursday to book a Miami Open title clash with American Coco Gauff.

Sabalenka, who fell to Rybakina in the Australian Open final before turning the tables on the Kazakh in the Indian Wells title match this earlier this month, broke the big-serving Rybakina twice in each set to come out on top in the blockbuster semifinal and keep her bid for the "Sunshine Double" of Indian Wells and Miami on track.

Men's world No. 2 Jannik Sinner, also advanced, dominating American Frances Tiafoe 6-2, 6-2 to reach the men's semifinals.

Their victories mean both the ATP and WTA could see a "Sunshine Double" in the same year.

Champ Chacarra jumps into lead

GURUGRAM, PTI

Eugenio Chacarra, who became the first Spaniard to win the Hero Indian Open in 2025, is now on course to becoming the first player to get back-to-back wins since India's SSP Chawrasia in 2017.

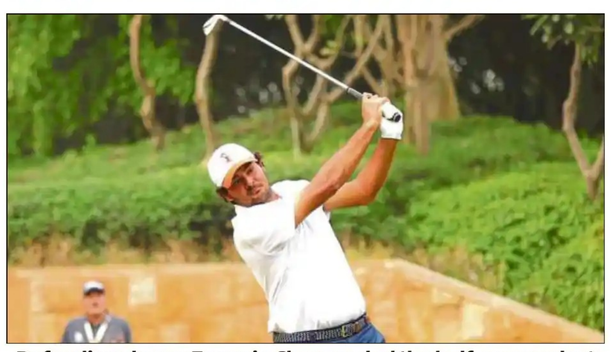
Chacarra, after opening the week with a 5-under 67, began the second round on the tenth tee but had two bogeys in his first five holes here on Friday. He repaired that with an eagle on the 18th. A bogey on the third was brushed aside with four birdies in the last six holes for a 69 and a halfway lead at 8-under.

Trailing Chacarra by one was South Africa's Casey Jarvis who admitted he is riding the crest of a wave as he put himself in contention for a third DP World Tour title this season. Jarvis is coming after two wins and a second place in his last three starts.

Only two Indians, Om Prakash Chouhan and teenager S Manoj, were assured of the weekend action.

Chouhan, who won a Hotel Planner event in 2023 and played the DP World Tour in 2024, carded 71 after his first round 73 to be even par for 36 holes and was tied 22nd.

He had a superb birdie spree of five gains in six holes between the ninth and 14th. Overall he had five birdies against four bogeys.



Defending champ Eugenio Chacarra led the halfway mark at 8-under at the Indian Open in Gurugram.

Archers hit bullseye in Bangkok

BANGKOK, PTI: Indian compound archers delivered a dominant performance, clinching the mixed team gold and women's team silver, while also sweeping the men's individual podium at the Asia Cup-World Ranking Tournament Stage 1, here on Friday.

India also bagged two silver medals in the recurve section in the afternoon session to take their tally to two gold, four silver and four bronze, surpassing their eight-medal haul at the previous edition.

But in gold medal count, India fared poorly as compared to the last edition when they clinched five yellow metals.

In a battle of two 22-year-olds, comeback man Kamboj emerged victorious in a closely-fought contest against the more decorated Prathamesh Jawkar, winning 145-144 to claim his maiden international gold.

Eighteen-year-old Tejal Salve defeated Mariia Dimidiuk, a Russian archer competing under a neutral flag, 144-135 to win the bronze in the women's compound individual section.

ISL receives Rs 2k cr-plus bid

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

All India Football Federation received two bids for its long-term commercial rights (15+5 years) for the Indian Super League packages with one of the bidders offering over Rs 2,000 crore.

New York-based sports data management company Genius Sports emerged as the biggest bidder at Rs 2,129 crore for the Package A (ISL and Super Cup). FanCode, which currently has the commercial rights for the ongoing season, followed next with an offer of Rs 1,190 crore (Rs 36 crore plus 5 per cent increment every year) for the same package. GMR Group, which appeared in the pre-bid meeting, made no bids on the deadline day for technical and commercial bids.

Meanwhile, Capri Sports, who owns UP Warriorz in WPL, made the lone bid for the commercial rights of the Indian Women's League and IWL 2, which was Package B.

Genius Sports, which entered the ISL bid for the first time, is the official data feed provider for the English Premier League, among several other European leagues. AIFF confirmed the submission of the bids in a statement.

"The bids have been submitted for a 15-year term with a provision for an additional five-year extension, with the bidder having the right of first refusal. The proposal also includes a five per cent increase in value every year over the duration of the agreement."

The bid evaluation report will be placed before the AIFF Executive Committee, which will meet on Sunday. A decision is expected on the same day.

Meanwhile, it is also learnt that AIFF shared the details of the bids with the ISL clubs in a meeting after the evaluation of the bids. The clubs have sought time to review the proposals.

Two-time Oly medallist Gurjant retires

NEW DELHI, PTI

India's two-time Olympic medallist Gurjant Singh on Friday retired from international hockey after an illustrious career, saying it's the appropriate time to quit after losing his place in the national team due to a back injury last year.

Gurjant represented India in 130 matches at the senior level and also helped the team win a gold medal at the 2023 Asian Games in China.

The 31-year-old forward from Khailara village in Amritsar was a member of the Indian team that won back-to-back bronze medals at the Tokyo and Paris Olympics.

He announced his retirement during the eighth Hockey India Annual Awards ceremony here on Friday.

Gurjant Singh. X

"We obviously know we're an aggressive team and we bat deep and all of those players take the game on and we get on really good surfaces, that group of batters is difficult to stop.

DANIEL VETTORI
SRH head coach

Defending champs RCB take on Sunrisers Hyderabad as big-ticket cricket returns to Chinnaswamy

BLOCKBUSTER opener loading

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

After much speculation on whether it will or won't, the M Chinnaswamy Stadium will finally host a high-profile cricket match in nearly 11 months when the Royal Challengers Bengaluru take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in what promises to be an explosive start to the 19th season of the IPL with plenty of stakes in it for the Karnataka State Cricket Association.

Just one look at the batting firepower both sides possess, and it's pretty certain they would be waiting to pull the trigger on Saturday and recreate the mayhem they did last year at the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow when Ishan Kishan smashed a 48-ball 94 to power SRH to 231/6 and RCB threatened to chase it down after openers Phil Salt (62, 32b) and Virat Kohli (43, 25b) went berserk before falling apart when the two got dismissed.

Hardly anything has changed in terms of personnel for both teams, but given the wealth of batting resources at Royal Challengers' disposal, the hosts face some tricky selection issues, and what playing XI — actually 12 considering the Impact Player rule — they put out for the season opener will give an early indication of how they want to go about their job this year.

The dilemma starts with the top, with at least three contenders for the opening slot. Virat Kohli is an automatic choice, but who of Salt and his young English compatriot Jacob Bethell will link up with the former skipper remains to be seen. Salt was brilliant last season, scoring 403 runs in 13 games at a scorching strike rate of 175.98, often setting the tempo for RCB while Kohli bided his time before switching gears.

The concern though is that Salt is checking into IPL on the back of a poor T20 World Cup for England, where he managed just 130 runs in eight games. On the other hand, the 22-year-old Bethell is buzzing with confidence, having scored an exceptional century in the semifinal, where he almost ruined India's party in Mumbai.

Even in the 'nets', Salt has looked edgy, while Bethell has appeared assured. However, RCB may stick with Salt, but will they use Bethell as a finisher, considering No. 3 and 4 are taken by the in-form Devdutt Padikkal and skipper Rajat Patidar?

The game will also offer a sneak peek into RCB's bowling reserves' potential, as two of last season's top performers — Yash Dayal and Josh Hazlewood — will be missing in action. While Dayal, in the middle of a legal wrangle, has ruled himself out of the season, Hazlewood, who arrived in the Garden City on Thursday, may miss a few games as he looks to get back into the groove following months on the sidelines due to a double injury.

This means RCB will be forced to play unheralded pacers like Rasikh Dar, Abhinandan Singh and Mangesh Yadav to pair up with the seasoned Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jacob Duffy, and how well these domestic picks respond, especially against a batting-heavy side like SRH, could have season-lasting implications.

Sunrisers, who possibly have the most marauding batting line-up with the likes of Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head, Ishan Kishan, Heinrich Klaasen and Liam Livingstone, will be looking to replicate the same all-out aggressive style of batting that got them mixed results last season. If they get going, or even RCB for that matter, it could be what the Bengaluru faithful had been waiting patiently for a long time.

RCB's Virat Kohli during a practice session in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/ PUSHKAR V

RCB record at M Chinnaswamy Stadium

Year	M	W	L	Win%
2025	5	2	3	40.0%
2024	7	4	3	57.1%
2023	7	3	4	42.9%
Overall	96	46	46	47.9%

IPL leaderboard

MOST RUNS

8661 runs **Virat Kohli**

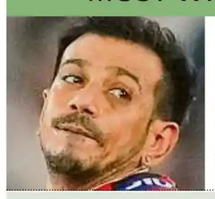
7046 runs **Rohit Sharma**

6769 runs **Shikhar Dhawan**

6565 runs **David Warner**

5528 runs **Suresh Raina**

MOST WICKETS



221 wickets **Yuzvendra Chahal**

198 wickets **Bhuvneshwar Kumar**

192 wickets **Sunil Narine**

192 wickets **Piyush Chawla**

187 wickets **Ravichandran Ashwin**

Compiled by Arun Gopalakrishnan

LIVE @ 7:30 PM
STAR SPORTS

Thushara ruled out of initial phase

Royal Challengers Bengaluru suffered another blow with Sri Lanka pacer Nuwan Thushara ruled out of the initial phase of the Indian Premier League, reports DHNS.

According to a Cricinfo report, Thushara was ruled out after failing a mandatory Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) fitness test and was denied a No-Objection Certificate (NOC).

Flower presses the reset button for Bengaluru

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower called his team's long-awaited title triumph last season the proudest moment, but said all that glory is in the past now and his men can't wait to defend the crown this year.

"I think when we go into these jobs and we represent our owners and our franchise and we represent each other, that always carries a responsibility and an accountability about how we conduct ourselves. But moving into this IPL, I think it's just tremendously exciting. Of course, we are the holders from last year, but this is a brand new year and we are all looking forward to this challenge," said the Zimbabwean at the pre-match press conference at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday.

"One of the truths in life is that change is always there. It's always happening. And we are a different group, different personnel, the guys are all a year older. Our opponents have changed and evolved in certain ways. Conditions might be very different. We haven't played in Chinnaswamy for a long time. We haven't played games here for many months. So the square might be a little bit different. And so the challenge of this IPL is completely different from the last one, and we are going to enjoy this challenge."

Although ace fast bowler Josh Hazlewood linked up with the squad on Thursday, Flower said the Australian is still not close to match fitness and expressed confidence in the Indian domestic trio of Mangesh Yadav, Rasikh Dar and Abhinandan Singh.

"So Hazlewood did arrive yesterday, he's looking fit. I did comment to him that he looks even younger than I remember him, so he's enjoyed some good downtime, but he's worked hard to get himself back up to full fitness. He won't be ready for tomorrow, he's just got off the plane, but we'll be monitoring his fitness very closely and looking forward to him making his entrance into the IPL."

"Obviously, Yash (Dayal) is not with us this year, unfortunately, so we have Mangesh and Abhinandan competing for a place. I'm not going to tell you now who's playing tomorrow, but we're happy with recruiting Mangesh, a left-arm seamer, to replace Yash Dayal. We're also happy with Abhinandan's progress, he's bowled a lot more in matches just recently, played in the recent DYP (DY Patil) competition, and did really well. And I think Rasik is a better bowler than he was last year, he's obviously been working very hard himself, and he shows a lot of qualities that could stand him in really good shape if he gets the chance in this tournament."

Flower finds Impact Player 'good innovation'

Since its introduction in the 2023 season, the Impact Player rule has come under severe criticism from a vast majority of the Indian players and captains. Former Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma and his successor Hardik Pandya felt it curtails the growth of all-rounders, forcing them to pick a player — substitute in this case — based purely on his batting or bowling skills, reports Sidney Kiran.

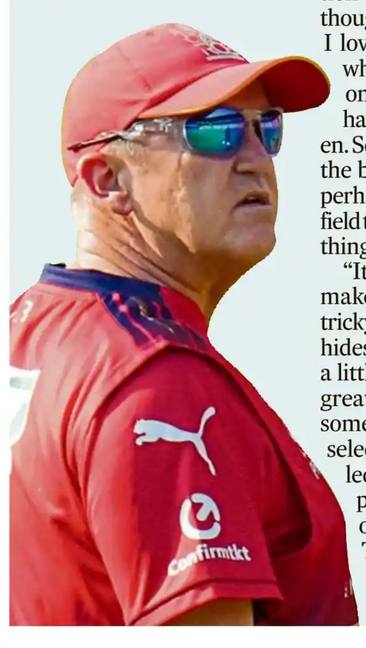
This year too, the controversial move by the BCCI which was first trialled in the 2022-23 Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy, attracted a lot of flak. Delhi Capitals skipper Axar Patel said he 'doesn't like it' while his Gujarat Titans counterpart Shubman Gill believes "it takes the skill out of the game" as "cricket in general is an 11-players' game".

Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower (**in pic**) felt the Impact Player rule, which the BCCI confirmed will stay until 2027 despite the massive hue and cry over it, is a good innovation that can help teams hide their weaknesses.

"I don't like sitting on the fence on stuff, but I'm going to give a couple of arguments. I think it has been a good innovation. It's interesting to be part of it when you're making decisions on the Impact Player, sometimes the timing of the input from the Impact Player," Flower started.

"I think it's interesting for the audience and the followers to debate what's right and what's wrong. So tactically, it's quite an interesting addition to the game. I must say though that one of the things I love about cricket is that when you select an eleven, one of the challenges you have is balancing your eleven. So balancing the length of the batting order, balancing perhaps some guys that can't field that well and taking those things into consideration.

"It's one of the things that makes selection a little bit tricky. The Impact Player rule hides that selection problem a little. So I think one of the great things about cricket is some of the debates around selection, and when you select perhaps single-skilled players, you weaken another area of your game. The Impact Player can hide that," Flower concluded.



Data-crunching Hubballi boy plotting Hyderabad's success

NATARAJ KATTI
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Cricket was Prateek Patil's passion -- something that excited him deeply from his childhood days. A good off-spinning all-rounder and a gun fielder, this diminutive Hubballi lad featured in the zonal and Karnataka age-group sides before taking a pause to pursue his higher studies. After completing BE in Electronics and Communication, and MS in Information Systems (Data Science) from the University of Melbourne, Prateek returned to cricket field, dugouts to be precise, as data/performance analyst.

As his job profile goes, Prateek is helping his franchises with data analytics to create a good pool of players with specific roles, provide insights to enhance players' performance, plot dismissals of rival batsmen et al.

Barely in his thirties, Prateek has already left his footprint in Women's Big Bash League, Women Premier League, GlobalT20 (Canada) and CSAT20. He also worked for ICC as data analyst between 2022 and 2024 during which he designed ICC fielding rankings.

Now, Prateek is all set for an IPL debut as lead performance analyst with Sunrisers Hyderabad.

His stocks went up after he helped the Sunrisers Eastern Cape win their third CSAT20 title in January. A few South African cricketers, regulars in the national side, are so impressed with Prateek's insights into the game that they call him and seek his advice when things aren't going their way.

Prateek works with the management and coaching staff of Sunrisers franchisees - SRH in IPL, Eastern Cape in CSAT20 and Sunrisers Leeds in the Hundred men's competition.

Prateek credits his good track record in academics and sport to his parents - Somanagouda, a farmer and Nirmala Annigeri, a retired principal of SK Arts College in Hubballi. "My parents and grandparents have played a massive role in laying a solid early childhood foundation. The work ethic, life discipline and routines all built from there," he says.

After finishing the two-year MS, he declined a lucrative offer from Commonwealth Bank and instead took up a data analyst's role with Sportradar, the official data supplier for the ICC.

During his three-year stint at Sportradar, Prateek designed ICC fielding rankings. In 2024, he joined InteractSport as head of business strategy.

He joined Surrey Jaguars setup in GT20, Canada, where he worked with coach Lalchand Rajput. He then worked with Abhishek Nayar with UP Warriorz in WPL 2025.

The same year, he was with Melbourne Renegades in Women's Big Bash League. In June 2025, SRH plucked him as Lead Performance Analyst.

Prateek credits his wife Sanjhna with making sacrifices and being a major source of inspiration. Incidentally Sanjhna is the daughter of Dayananda Shetty, a batsman of some repute during his playing days.

"I am really blessed to have met and married Sanjhna. Learn a lot from her on a daily basis. Her support has played the biggest role in my success in the last 3-4 years. She has been sacrificing a lot and I am driven to make it all worthwhile," Prateek says.

Prateek Patil (left), lead analyst for Sunrisers Hyderabad, during players' auction in December last in Abu Dhabi.

'Kishan's experience got the nod for captaincy'

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

With regular skipper Pat Cummins, who is still recovering from a lumbar stress injury, all but ruled out for at least three weeks of this season's IPL, Sunrisers Hyderabad had a tough decision to make in appointing a stand-in skipper. In a team loaded with at least five international stars, the deliberation could have been hard, but the 2016 champions chose man of the moment Ishan Kishan to tide them through the tricky phase.

Head coach Daniel Vettori said Kishan's leadership attributes, which the franchise witnessed in him in the previous season and also when he led Jharkhand to the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy glory last year, tipped the scales in his favour.

"So when Paddy (Cummins) was unfortunately out of the initial stage of the tournament (this season), we obviously had some decisions to make, and his (Kishan) experience with his state team in particular had been so impressive, and then obviously he was in really good form. So between Abhishek (Sharma) and himself, we feel like we've got a really good leadership group to lead us this year," said Vettori at the pre-match press conference.

BCCI policy that rotates only between certain 'privileged' venues

MADHU JAWALI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Two incidents related to Indian cricket recently set social media abuzz with opinions. One involved a decision by the Board of Control for Cricket in India that highlighted the preferential treatment given to venues represented by powerful officials within the board.

The other came from Karnataka legislators, who openly claimed that each MLA and MLC was entitled to at least five VIP IPL tickets. This demand drew sharp and widespread, justifiably so, criticism from the public.

The lawmakers' unreasonable demand underscored the difficult position of sports administrators, who often operate under pressure from the political class and government officials.

At the same time, the BCCI's decision to allot Test matches of the high-profile Border-Gavaskar Trophy series to Guwahati, Ranchi and Ahmedabad, while overlooking the legitimate claims of traditional Test centres, showed that the board's functioning is hardly above criticism. The only difference, perhaps, is that politicians tend to be less subtle.

Consider this. Ranchi hosted England in February 2024, while Guwahati made its Test debut last year by hosting defending World Test champions South Africa. Ahmedabad, in addition to hosting several marquee ICC matches including knockouts and finals, has staged four Test matches since February 2021.

These include two against England and one each against Australia and West Indies. In the same period, Bengaluru and Mumbai have hosted only two Tests each, none of them involving England or Australia. Mumbai last hosted Australia in 2001, while Bengaluru did so in 2017.

According to convention, the BCCI follows a rotation policy when allocating matches. Given the country's size and the widespread popularity of the game, this approach is meant to keep all state associations satisfied. However, the policy appears to be applied selectively. The BCCI secretary, Devajit Saikia, is from Guwahati, and it is hardly surprising that Ahmedabad, home to the Narendra Modi Stadium, continues to host a disproportionate number of high-profile matches.

Chennai, Kolkata, Mohali, Nagpur and Mumbai have all benefited from preferential treatment at different times when officials from these regions held key positions in the BCCI. However, it has rarely been this obvious. While administrators may feel some obligation towards their home associations, it should not descend into blatant favouritism.

This has again stirred the topic of fixed venues for Test matches -- especially for high-profile series involving England and Australia or even South Africa. Agreed, consumption of international cricket isn't the sole right of tier-1 cities. However, the audience in tier-2 cities has less appetite for red-ball cricket as opposed to its white-ball version. The crowd attendences for Test matches over the years prove this point.

Therefore, rotating marquee Tests between six-seven centres that have shown great appreciation for high-quality red-ball cricket would serve at least twin purposes. While the Indian team will greatly benefit from the prior knowledge of the conditions, Test cricket will receive the patronage not only it deserves but requires too at this moment.

Guwahati's Barsapara Stadium, which hosted South Africa late last year, has secured a Test in the Border-Gavaskar series against Australia early next year. PTI FILE PHOTO

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Saturday, March 28, 2026

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STYLE FILE P03

ADVERTORIAL & PROMOTIONAL LIFESTYLE FEATURE

CEO FOR THE HOME

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SUMMER INDULGENCE

PAGE 03

Show Buzz | Aparshakti Khurana

'Audiences have started accepting cinema of all languages ...'

Actor Aparshakti Khurana stepped into Bollywood over a decade ago with Dangal (2014), and now he's geared up for a promising Tamil debut - ROOT: Running Out Of Time - also starring Gautham Ram Kartik.

Shilpi Madan caught up with him for this chat.

On his debut in Tamil films...

I saw the rushes of a Web series that the film's director Sooriyaprathap had made, and it looked promising. So, I decided to collaborate with him.

On acting in a movie where he doesn't think in that language...

It's difficult to act in a movie when you are not thinking in that language. I had to think in English, translate it and then deliver the performance. It changes your impromptu behaviour and certain reflexes. Having said that, before hitting the floor, we went through enough workshops to understand the language.

On today's audience accepting cinema irrespective of language...

I am happy to see the blurring of boundaries between industries and artistes working across languages. We all live in India, and when audiences have started accepting all languages and cinema, why shouldn't artistes from one industry be cast in another? It's a lot of fun for the actor, writer, director and audience to see what comes out of it. I'm looking forward to working in different languages.

On working in ROOT...

It was a fine experience in filmmaking. Before ROOT, there were a couple of Tamil scripts that came my way. However, the talks did not progress further. It's beautiful to be working with this amazing and talented cast and crew. We've made a film that all of us are very proud of. It's very different from what I've done so far. I'm already reading another Tamil movie script.

On his upcoming projects...

I am currently shooting my first action film - Gunmaaster G9. Another release of mine this year will be Badtameez Gill, a story of a dysfunctional family featuring Vaani Kapoor and me as siblings, with Paresh Rawal and Sheeba Chadha playing our parents.

> I'm looking forward to working in films of different languages

Cirrhosis: Personalised treatment plans enhance outcomes

Objectively assessing sarcopenia scores is crucial in treating patients with cirrhosis, explains **Dr HRS Girn**, Senior Consultant – HPB and Liver Transplant Surgeon, **Aster Whitefield Hospital**

Cirrhosis is a late-stage liver disorder characterised by irreversible scarring (fibrosis) and distortion of normal liver architecture, resulting from chronic liver injury due to causes such as viral hepatitis, alcohol abuse or metabolic diseases. As healthy liver tissue is progressively replaced by scarred tissue, the liver function declines, leading to complications such as portal hypertension, ascites, jaundice and hepatic encephalopathy.

Cirrhosis may remain asymptomatic in its early stages, but as the disease progresses, patients commonly develop fatigue, weakness, loss of appetite, nausea and weight loss. Advanced disease is characterised by jaundice, abdominal swelling due to ascites, leg oedema, easy bruising and itching.

Categories of patients

Patients with cirrhosis can be categorised broadly into three clinical groups – compensated asymptomatic cirrhotics, those with acute on chronic liver failure. (ACLF), those with decompensated cirrhosis requiring recurrent admissions, hospital visits/interventions.

Liver transplant is the only curative option for patients with decompensated cirrhosis or end stage liver disease.

Sarcopenia scoring is essential

It's important to understand the link between chronic liver disease and sarcopenia assessment with objective scoring. This is a common and clinically significant complication in cirrhotic patients which is often overlooked. Sarcopenia is the progressive loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength. The condition arises due to multiple mechanisms, including impaired protein synthesis, chronic inflammation, hormonal imbalance and malnutrition associated with liver dysfunction.

Medically, a low sarcopenic score indicates frailty in the cirrhotic patient and inability to self-care. Importantly, sarcopenia has emerged as an independent predictor of poor outcomes in cirrhosis, beyond conventional prognostic systems like model of end stage liver disease (MELD) scores. A screening for sarcopenia should be performed along with other treatment plans. Muscle strength tests (hand grip strength) along with imaging modalities such as DEXA scan and Psoas mass index using conventional CT are essential to confirm diagnosis and assessing degree of frailty.

The presence of sarcopenia is associated with increased mortality, higher risk of complications such as hepatic encephalopathy, prolonged ICU stays and reduced survival rate following liver transplant. In the absence of sarcopenia assessment patients and doctors underestimate the degree of severity of underlying liver disease. This makes timely decision-making difficult for the families and caregivers, eventually leading to expectation mismatch.

Dr HRS Girn

Therefore, early identification and aggressive management of sarcopenia are crucial components in the holistic care pathway of a patient with cirrhosis. Prehabilitation before surgery is an essential component of care for such patients. In cirrhotic patients, sarcopenia-focused prehabilitation typically includes individualised nutritional support (targeted high-protein diet, late evening snack to reduce catabolism via oral or enteral routes in some cases), structured exercise programmes (combining resistance and aerobic training to enhance muscle mass and strength) and regular functional assessment. These interventions help counteract muscle wasting driven by metabolic imbalance and inflammation in cirrhosis.

Importantly, effective prehabilitation improves functional capacity, reduces complications and enhances both pre- and post-transplant outcomes. Thus, early identification and targeted management of sarcopenia play a crucial role in managing prognosis and quality of life in cirrhotic patients.

Boost iron intake with Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt and prevent anaemia

The Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt gives you the vital micronutrients - iron and iodine – that aren't always found adequately in traditional Indian diets. This fortified salt addresses the challenge of iron deficiency that is leading to widespread anaemia among children and women in India

Iron deficiency is one of the leading causes of anaemia and remains one of India's most prevalent, yet overlooked, nutrition challenge. Iron deficiency affects energy level, immunity and cognitive development silently, particularly among children, adolescents and women, thereby affecting their overall well-being. To address this gap, ITC Aashirvaad, one of India's most trusted food brands, announced the launch of Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt, fortified with visible iron boosters along with iodine.

Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt is a scientifically-designed solution that delivers iron through salt, a basic everyday ingredient in Indian households. One teaspoon (five gm) of this salt provides 25 per cent of average daily iron requirement based on ICMR-NIN dietary guidelines, while ensuring no change in the food's taste. The product enables families to boost their iron intake daily, with minimal habit shift. For example, one teaspoon (five gm) of salt contains iron equivalent to one bowl of spinach.

According to national surveys, 67 per cent of pre-schoolers, 59 per cent of adolescent girls, 57 per cent of adult women, 31 per cent of adolescent boys (source: NFHS-5 - 2019-21) and 24 per cent of school-age children (5-9 years) in India are anaemic (source: CNNS - 2019), indicating widespread iron inadequacy across age groups and geographies.

Current Indian dietary practices with limited iron-rich foods makes it difficult to meet the daily iron requirements through diet alone. For simplified context, daily iron need for children (4-18 years) and adults range from 11 mg to 32 mg, equivalent to iron from 2-7 bowls of spinach (one bowl of fresh spinach yields 160 gm) or 7-21 beetroots (one beetroot yields 200 gm).

Speaking on the launch, Anuj Rustagi, Business Unit Chief Executive - Staples, ITC Ltd, said, "Visible signs of iron deficiency are often ignored, but its impact on everyday energy level is persistent in India, especially among young children and adult women. Over the last five years, through the ITC project 'Samposhan', working along with various public health organisations and NGOs, we have demonstrated the impact of regular use of iron-fortified salt in reducing anaemia. The launch of Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt is a culmination of this learning. With Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt, we are enabling families incorporate essential micro-nutrients iron and iodine into daily cooking. To encourage adoption, we are launching this innovation at the same price as regular Aashirvaad Iodized Salt".

The new Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt has been launched in Bengaluru across retail stores and is priced at Rs 30 MRP. Plans are underway to introduce the product across India in the near future.

Why Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt should be in your cooking?

- Millions of children in India suffer from iron deficiency
- ITC's Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt provides 25 per cent of daily iron requirement
- Aashirvaad Iron Shakti Salt is fortified with visible iron boosters
- One teaspoon fulfils 25 per cent of daily recommended iron requirement
- Enables you to incorporate essential micro-nutrients - iron and iodine - into your daily cooking
- Priced at Rs 30 (MRP) - same as ITC's Aashirvaad Iodized Salt – to encourage consumption of this salt that's fortified further

Cool in the summer

Do your living spaces turn into mini ovens in the summer afternoons, but they aren't designed for air conditioning? All you need is some smart interior decor to bring the temperature down.

Window treatment

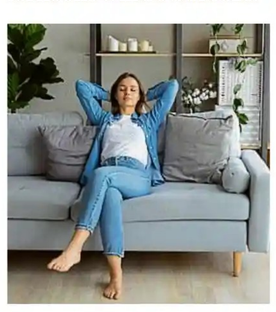
Begin with window treatment - light cotton curtains in pastel shades that don't trap heat inside. Heavy drapes may do the job of blocking harsh sunlight but also trap heat inside and lead to uncomfortably warm interiors.

Green corners

Next come the corners – nothing like leafy plants in clay planters that are both aesthetic and cooling. Ensure the plants are watered only as much as needed and remove dead leaves daily. You also need to watch for pests and ensure the plants don't attract mosquitoes.

Earthy in decor

Finally, cut down on large metals in decor and go in for earthenware instead. Bowls of fresh water near windows placed such that the breeze blows in over them creates a cooling effect. Run the fan on slow mode and the summer afternoons will be a breeze.



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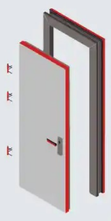

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HOME FRONT

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

HIRING A HOUSE MANAGER

First, define exactly what you need from the manager. Screen candidates who have experience in managing the tasks you have defined. Spend a lot of time on scrutiny of referrals, especially for dependability, trustworthiness and commitment. Ensure you are comfortable sharing personal spaces and details before hiring a manager.

SKILLS TO LOOK FOR

A house manager needs to be excellent in people management to run your house smoothly. Language is crucial as the person needs to understand exactly what you say and want. Some experience is needed if the candidate has to run a large household and manage staff across different functions.

CEO FOR THE HOME

Swatee Jog looks at how the ultra-rich with hectic lifestyles are hiring house managers and buying back time, peace and freedom

Recently, an Indian tech CEO was in the news for hiring a house manager. While some may find it unusual to hire someone to manage the household, it seems commonplace among India's ultra-high-net-worth (UHNI) circles to have such a person, quietly becoming a smart, strategic decision rather than an indulgence.

The wealthiest families in India today are not just the old moneyed but also new-age promoters, founders, second-generation entrepreneurs, professionals with global portfolios for whom time is now the most expensive currency. And managing an Indian household, even with domestic staff, is far more complex than it appears. More so if the family is large, all members are active, travel often and have children and senior citizens at home.

Invisible load

Indian homes, especially affluent ones, are ecosystems in themselves. Imagine the family dramas depicted in cinema - multiple staff members, diverse expectations from every member, festivals, rituals, guests, travel, properties in different cities, security, vendors, vehicles, repairs, inventories, parents and so on.

While traditionally, much of this invisible labour has fallen on the lady of the house or a trusted elder, it is not the same today. With both partners leading demanding professional lives - and global exposure reshaping priorities - that model is changing for the good, thanks to professionals who take over as house managers.

House manager is an investment

India's ultra-rich are increasingly viewing personal life through the same lens as business - delegation, systems and accountability leading to higher returns on investment - read free time, tension-free home and happy family.

When a house manager is in place, they don't have to worry about making decisions constantly. Whatever time they get as a family, can be enjoyed fully. Workdays stop bleeding into domestic fire-fighting and travel becomes smoother and stress-free.

Mrudul Shah, a 35-year-old Mumbai-based private equity professional, says, "I can negotiate a Rs 500-crore deal calmly because I know my parents, kids, home and staff are all being handled by someone competent. That peace is priceless". Mrudul pays her house manager a salary that can be the envy of a techie but says it's worth every penny.

House manager's perspective

Interestingly, the role is evolving into a serious profession. Most house managers come through agencies or referrals after thorough due diligence.

Sethu Madhavan, a house manager who works for a north Indian industrial family, says, "My job is to make sure the family never has to think about the house unless they want to come home and enjoy. I manage 14 staff, three properties, festivals, guests and emergencies. Discretion and anticipation are more important than authority." Sethu also does fire-fighting when sudden emergencies arise or unusual demands like movie tickets, restaurant bookings or last-minute shopping is to be done.

Like Sethu, many house managers today come from hospitality, luxury hotels, armed forces backgrounds, or family office environments.

What sets house managers apart

- Deep cultural understanding
- Knowledge about religious practices and requirements
- Multi-generational family dynamics
- Ability to manage constant inflow of relatives, guests and staff
- Knowledge of school schedules and care for the elderly
- Knowing the right contacts in case of emergencies

A good house manager understands when to be invisible and when to take charge. That's why the role is growing fast among Indian families who opt for intentional living rather than burning out toiling on their own. They spend money to buy back time, peace of mind and freedom.

Professional management

A house manager is not just a senior domestic staff member. Think of them as trained, experienced and professional COO of the household.

Their role typically includes:

- Managing and supervising all domestic staff
- Scheduling, payroll, leave and discipline
- Coordinating vendors, repairs, AMC contracts, making bill payments
- Overseeing kitchens, inventories in pantry, hygiene standards
- Managing events, guests and festival logistics
- Acting as a single point of accountability for the house

In larger set-ups, they also liaise with security teams, drivers, property managers and family offices, thus simplifying and centralising an array of complex tasks.

Vasanti and Abhiram Karmarkar, both forty plus Bengaluru-based tech founders, who recently hired a full-time house manager, say, "We didn't realise how much headspace our home took until we hired our house manager. Earlier, we would take a break from board meetings and important events and step outside to make calls about staff, kids, groceries, repairs or guests. Messages would be constantly buzzing asking for instructions from domestic help, chef and nanny. Today, our house runs like a well-managed company, leaving us free to focus."

For many HNIs, the biggest benefit isn't luxury - it's mental clarity and saved time.

LEISURE

Beetle Bailey

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GREG + MORT WALKER
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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

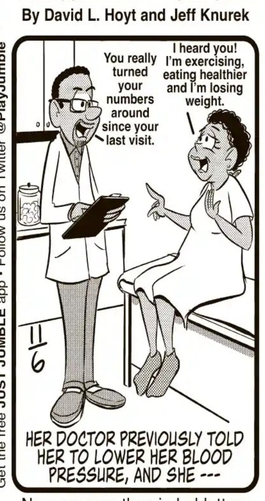
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TOBHO

SBACI

TKINET

SYRUTT


You really turned your numbers around since your last visit.
I heard you! I'm exercising, eating healthier and I'm losing weight.
HER DOCTOR PREVIOUSLY TOLD HER TO LOWER HER BLOOD PRESSURE, AND SHE ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @Play Jumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

_ _ _ _ _ _ TO _ _ _ _ _ _

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Answers

BOOTH BASIC KITTEN TRUSTY

Her doctor previously told her to lower her blood pressure, and she — TOOK IT TO HEART

HITORI-139

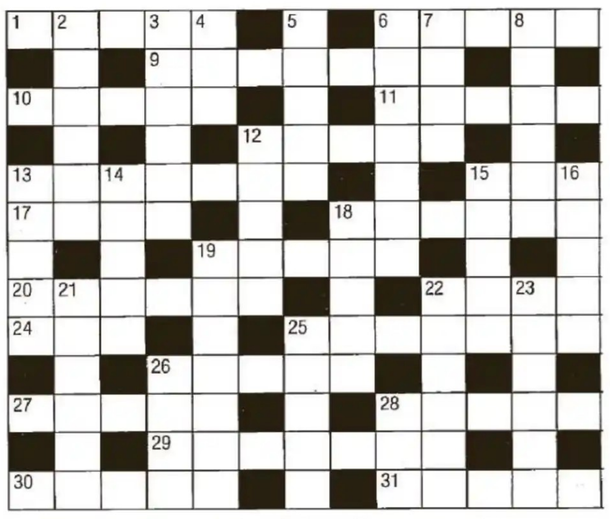
2	4	5	7	8	3	3	1
6	2	1	4	2	3	3	8
7	7	3	6	6	8	5	3
7	3	8	5	1	3	4	3
3	1	6	2	6	7	8	6
4	5	2	8	3	1	7	3
8	3	3	6	4	6	6	2
6	2	7	4	6	6	1	6

SOLUTION for HITORI-139

■	1	6	■	4	7	2	■
2	6	■	4	■	3	■	8
■	7	1	3	8	2	5	4
6	8	7	■	2	■	1	3
■	4	■	1	5	8	3	7
3	5	8	■	6	■	7	■
8	■	2	3	■	1	■	6
1	3	■	8	7	5	4	2

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 140



EASY

ACROSS
1 Enlist (5)
6 Digging tool (5)
9 Fundamental (7)
10 Pungent (5)
11 Utter in words (5)
12 Belief (5)
13 Inhabitant (7)
15 Thus (3)
17 Brio (4)
18 Salad fruit (6)
19 Pixie (5)
20 Planet (6)
22 Penalty (4)
24 Small piece (3)
25 Furniture item (7)
26 Wild (5)
27 Big cat (5)
28 Glazing paste (5)
29 Wash (7)
30 Stink (5)
31 Tiny (5)

DOWN
2 American coin (6)
3 Source (6)
4 Stripling (3)
5 Female fox (5)
6 Smoked sausage (7)
7 Conspiracy (4)
8 Fraud (6)
12 American state (5)
13 First game (5)
14 Water nymph (5)
15 Fabric (5)
16 Celestial body (5)
18 Test (5)
19 Burial or cremation (7)
21 Radioactive element (6)
22 Shape (6)
23 Tidy (6)
25 Shrewd (5)
26 Cut down (4)
28 Favourite (3)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Box containing vital personal necessities (5)
6 Silly party for a teetotal Yankee (5)
9 Academic taking tea with an actress (7)
10 Bore one had to put up with (5)
11 Transport by car and railway (5)
12 Schoolchild making a light admission? (5)
13 What a deb will do, as will emerge (4,3)
15 Sorry the cake was a failure (3)
17 Given the chop by a cross editor (4)
18 Some recent revelations to give us heart (6)
19 Make too hot and wet (5)
20 Figure not to get far in a loving embrace (6)
22 Dad holds up an immobile creature (4)
24 Very good at baking? (3)
25 Keeper of a dog on a hill (7)
26 Was fishy (or ratty?) (5)
27 To start straight to work can give a certain edge (5)
28 Pallid as Patsy may be (5)
29 County with part of Leith on its border! (7)
30 It would augment the zoo's total exhibits (5)
31 Stave off having to pay out for a roller (5)

DOWN
2 Its contents go to one's head (6)
3 Strode restlessly around when kept (6)
4 He wanted to get rid of that sickly look (3)
5 One who ventures to look around? (5)
6 Chose to be positive (7)
7 In such exams, does a pupil get nothing right? (4)
8 Jack's double is a fearsome fellow (6)
12 Left or right sock (5)
13 Trick a pet companion (5)
14 It's worth getting right in time, perhaps (5)
15 Can such friends get drunk on milk? (5)
16 Exclude new bread (5)
18 See an oaf hit (5)
19 In ridiculous races, the parliamentarian will run (7)
21 Being high, frequently shown the way out (6)
22 Long way to go for a hat! (6)
23 Left a half of beer or stout (6)
25 In church, there's plenty of this stuff (5)
26 One flat on the bed? (4)
28 Philip Pirrip, that seedy character (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 140

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Chest 6, Do-TT-y 9, Tea-Cher 10, Stood 11, Car-Ry, 12, Pupil 13, Come out 15, Sad 17, A-X-ed, 18, centre 19, Scald 20, CL-inch 22, P-up-a 24, Hot 25, Cur-a-tor 26, Smelt 27, Str-Op. 28, Pasty 29, Left-rim 30, Adder 31, Pa-RR-y.
DOWN: 2, Hatbox 3, Stored 4, Ted 5, Scout 6, Decided 7, O-R-a-L 8, Tar-tar 12, Punch 13, Cat-CH 14, Me-R-it 15, (milk) Stout 16, Debar 18, C-lout 19, Sca-MP-er 21, L-oft-ed 22, Panama 23, Port er 25, C-lot-h, 26, Sole 28, Pip.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Enrol 6, Spade 9, Radical 10, Acrid 11, Voice 12, Tenet 13, Denizen 15, Sic 17, Elan 18, Tomato 19, Fairy 20, Uranus 22, Fine 24, Tad 25, Cabinet 26, Feral 27, Tiger 28, Putty 29, Launder 30, Small 31, Teeny.
DOWN: 2, Nickel 3, Origin 4, Lad 5, Vixen 6, Saveloy 7, Plot 8, Deceit 12, Texas 13, Debut 14, Naiad 15, Satin 16, Comet 18, Trial 19, Funeral 21, Radium 22, Figure 23, Neaten 25, Canny 26, Fell 28, Pet.

Wknd. SUMMER

Carry your cooler in a bottle that's well-insulated. Add some ice and pieces of frozen fruit to keep the juice cold longer

PRO TIP

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

ICED TEA TO COOL OFF

Herbal tea, chilled, is a refreshing and nutrition-rich drink in the summer. Green tea is a popular choice. This drink is an antioxidant and reduces inflammation. It's a great option if you are engaging in meetings outdoors and need something to sip on. You can even drink it hot if you choose to.

GO DESI

Buttermilk is a great choice to cool off in summer. You can infuse it with cumin and curry leaves along with small pieces of ginger. You can even season it with mustard seeds. Add a pinch of salt to it. Buttermilk is excellent for digestion. If you are having a bad stomach day that's common in summer, this is a great antidote.

Summer **Sips**

Carry along coolers

The summer heat is on and if you are outdoors during the day, you need to carry a cooler along for that much-needed sip now and then. This is the season to ensure you are adequately hydrated and carrying your own fluids cuts the risk of infection from unhygienic drinks outside. So, here are some cool summer drinks you can carry with you easily.

GO CITRUS

There's nothing like juice from a citrus fruit to keep you rejuvenated during the summer. Citrus fruits also strengthen your immune system to help fight the common summer infections. Mosambi, orange, grape and lemon are popular choices. Avoid infusing the juice with sugar. Carry the juice in a flask and protect from direct sunlight.

COCONUT WATER

As a first choice, try to locate a vendor. You find many of them these days in every locality. If you are in locations where you don't have access to one, carry tender coconut water for a drink midday. It's a natural way to replenish your electrolytes if you are outdoors for long spells and sweat profusely.

Lemonade

A very popular choice in the summer, this is easy to make. Squeeze the juice from a lemon into a flask of water. Add a pinch of salt and carry it along for a refreshing sip whenever you need it. Lemonade hydrates you and the salt in it helps maintain the balance of water needed.

HERBAL COOLER

You can infuse the fluid you are carrying with some herbs for added cooling and nutrition. Lemon water infused with fresh mint leaves is a great way to cool off. Mint is nutrient-rich and aids in digestion. This is a good option in summer when you need to keep your digestion system strong.

Fluid elegance for summer

Bring in the sheer magic this summer with lace, crochet and translucence, says **Shilpi Madan**

Style **File**

There is a sense of magic that happens with the wispy touches to shapely creations. Soft, tactile fabrics that move gently bringing in a touch of warmth, ease and quiet sophistication. Make it yours this summer.

Here is your to-do guide:

Layers and wraps

There is beauty in layers and a wrapped neckline that brings with it elegant tie-ups and soft gathers create a sense of warmth through its gentle volume. Go for stylish tops in semi-sheers, satins and organza, in comfortable A-line silhouettes.

Asymmetrical ruffled hems add to the appeal in a quiet way, carrying forth a blend of comfort and quiet sophistication.

Right neckline

An airy, natural feel adds to the light, effortless touch of an outfit. Go for the right neckline. With a halter-neck and soft sweetheart neckline, choose twisted spaghetti straps that create an elegant feminine silhouette. Everyday glamour gains a new dimension with the choice of neckline.

Avoid the polo neck and sherwani cut in the blazing heat.

Sheer on

Summer fashion celebrates the element of soft sheer through the season, bringing in comfortable, airy layering, delicate touches in elements of lace and crochet, and fluidity in the rhythm of voluminous silhouettes that move as you move.

Think sheer blouses with sophisticated sleeve detailing, ruffled skirts and sheer dresses with frills and trims. Combining sheers in frothy fabrics with light, structured linen blazers adds to the wearability.

Style check

- A single element of sheer in your appearance works best. Too many such elements results in overkill
- Work with light summer shades - pastels and primarily whites - to make the trend work to your advantage
- Keep accessories simple to let the sheers speak elegance. Less is more
- Wear make-up that accentuates the no make-up look for clean sophistication
- Make sure the clothes you wear shine through clean contours - no crumples

PICS COURTESY: POPPI CLOTHING

Summer indulgence

Swatee Jog has five easy-to-make desserts just right for the hot summer days

Tongue **Tickler**

If you can 'feel summer' in the air and are looking for joy in the heat, you need a dessert that cools and comforts. Chilled desserts are a clear favourite, especially during late lunches or lazy late-afternoon soirees. And the best part? Summer desserts don't have to be heavy, calorie-loaded or time-consuming to prepare.

A quick stroll through the market in summer reveals a riot of colours with fresh fruits, berries, tender coconut and even edible flowers. Fruits and cream come in handy to whip up any kind of dessert that appeals to all ages. Summer is truly special with tropical flavours coming alive in the kitchen.

This season, embrace the abundance and whip up some easy, refreshing, chilled desserts using fresh, local produce. After all, a little indulgence never hurts anyone.

Tender Coconut Chia Pudding

Light, hydrating and effortlessly wholesome. Extract water from four large tender coconuts. Add chia seeds and let them bloom. Stir in fresh cream for richness. Sweetening is optional, as coconut water brings its own natural sweetness. Top with slices of pineapple, mango, seasonal berries or a hint of passion fruit, and serve. It's refreshing, nourishing and completely guilt-free.

Aam Panna Granita

Prepare aam panna using cooked mango turned into pulp. Strain it. Add roasted cumin powder, black salt and a touch of jaggery to balance the sour flavour. Pour one part of the panna into a shallow dish and freeze. Every 30 minutes, scrape with a fork to create icy crystals. Serve chilled in a glass with the remaining panna, garnished with mint leaves. It is tangy, cooling and incredibly refreshing, perfect for a harsh summer afternoon.

Orange Jaggery Panna Cotta

This is a comforting take on the classic Panna Cotta with earthy Indian notes. Warm fresh cream gently with jaggery powder and fresh orange juice. Add a touch of orange zest and a hint of crushed cardamom for that earthy depth. Prepare gelatin separately and mix it into the warm cream. Pour into small cups and allow it to set.

Serve chilled, topped with orange segments or a spoon of marmalade. It's an ideal dessert for elegant evening gatherings.

Grilled Pineapple Honey Yogurt Sundae

Pick a ripe pineapple and cut into slices. Lightly grill the pineapple slices and poke some holes in it with a fork. Allow it to cool completely. Now, drizzle honey, a dash of crushed pepper or chaat masala. Beat chilled hung curd well to form a homogenous paste and add a pinch of salt and sugar.

Serve the pineapple slices with a dollop of the chilled hung curd, garnished with nuts or berries.

Watermelon Feta Popsicle

Popsicle is everybody's all-time favourite. It reminds you of the childhood you relished with homemade treats. De-seed a ripe, red watermelon and cut it into pieces. Blend it with a tiny feta crumble or cream. Add a dash of mint. Freeze in popsicle moulds overnight and serve frozen. Sure to be a hit with the kids and healthy too.

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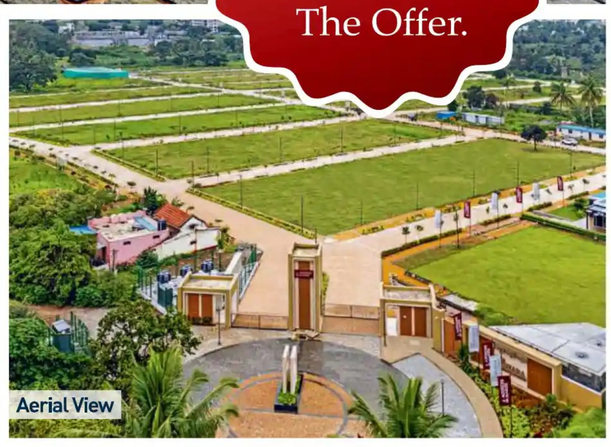

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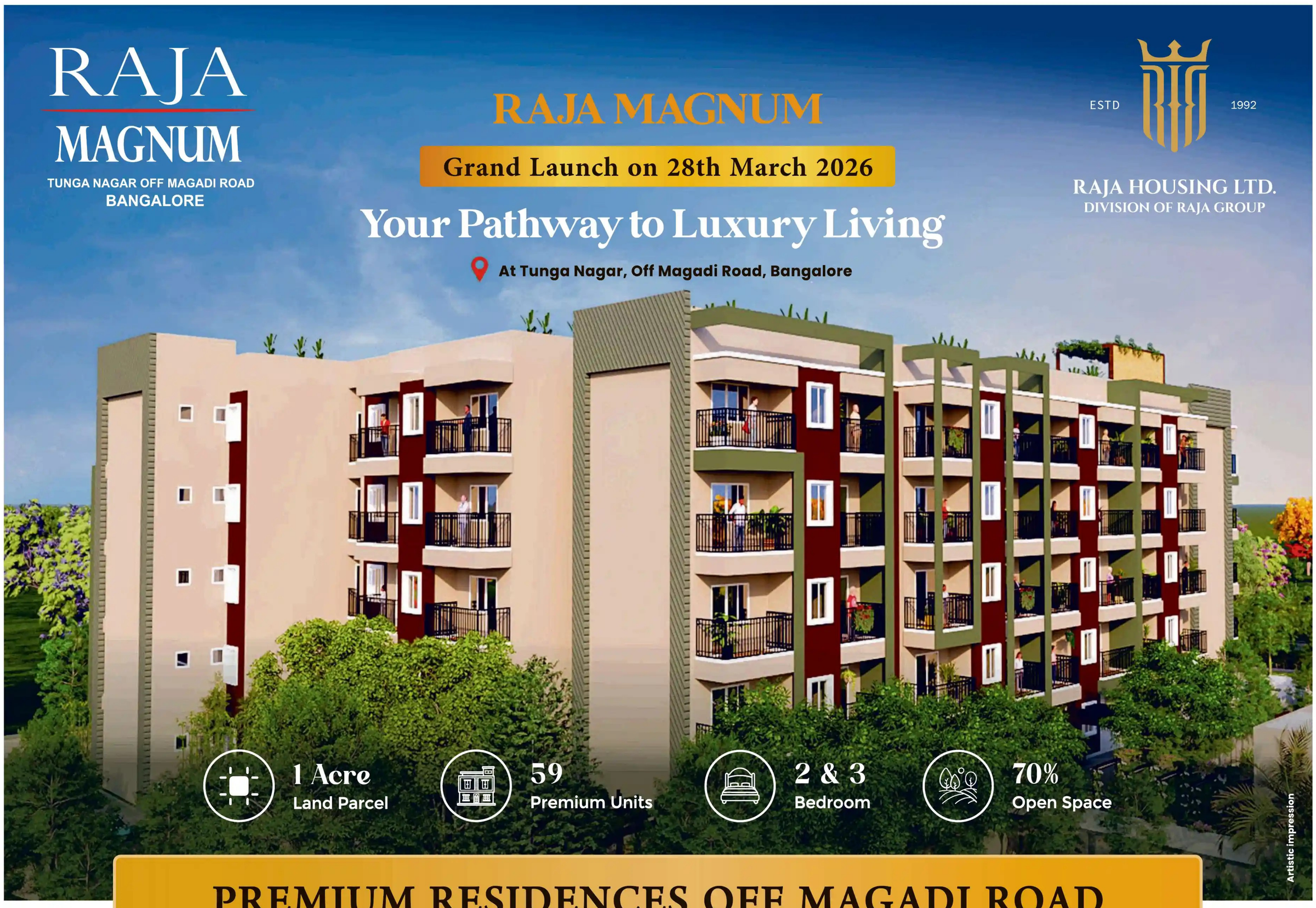

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